THE SPECTRE LOVER.

BY

MRS. EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "FAIR PLAY," "HOW HE WON HER," "CHANGED BRIDES," "BRIDE'S FATE," "MIRIAM," "CRUEL AS THE GRAVE," "TRIED FOR HER LIFE," "RETRIBUTION," "THE LOST HEIRESS," "FORTUNE SEEKER," "DESERTED WIFE," ETC.

AND OTHER STORIES BY HER SISTER,

MRS. FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

AUTHOR OF "THE BRIDE'S SECRET," ETC.

"*Hereafter, in that land where all are pure,*
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband—not a smaller soul,
Not Lancelot nor another. Leave me that
I charge thee, my last hope. Now I go hence."—TENNYSON.

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TO

MISS BLANCHE PORTER,

THIS BOOK IS INSCRIBED

WITH THE ESTEEM AND AFFECTION

OF

THE AUTHORS.

PROSPECT COTTAGE,
GEORGETOWN, D. C.

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THE SPECTRE LOVER.

BY EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST MEETING.

I give thee love as God gives light,
Apart from merit or from prayer,
Rejoicing in its own delight,
And freer than the boundless air.

I give thee prayers, like jewels strung
On golden threads of hope and fear,
And thoughts more tender than e'er hung
In a sad angel's pitying tear.—ANONYMOUS.

THE following strange incident in the career of a popular artiste, who has long since passed to spirit-life, was related to me by the subject of it herself.

I give it as received, only changing proper names, because there are persons still living who were interested, and who might shrink from having their names publicly associated with a so-called "supernatural" event.

We were sitting over my wood-fire in the cottage parlor, one Sunday evening near the close of December, and our talk turned upon modern spiritualism and its marvels, when she suddenly exclaimed:

"I do not believe in these manifestations! I would not believe in them though 'one should rise from the dead' to

attest their truth. Indeed, if I may trust the evidence of my own senses, one *has* arisen from the dead to tell me of the life and love that lives after death. Yet I did not believe him."

"You!" I exclaimed in surprise; for if ever there was a matter-of-fact materialist under the sun it was my gifted friend Mrs. M——.

"I!" she said, emphatically. "I have seen several ghosts; *one* interviewed me. *I know it*, though I do not believe it! That seems a paradox; but I assure you, my dear, that we may know things that we cannot believe as well as believe things we cannot know. I repeat that I have seen several ghosts and been interviewed by *one*. I *know* I have, and yet I cannot believe it. That is to say, I cannot realize it."

"Will you tell me all about it?"

"Yes, I should like to do so; especially about the ghost who interviewed me," she said, and then she began in a graver tone:

"I think that I was a clairvoyant from earliest infancy; but clairvoyance was so natural to me that I was never surprised or frightened at what I saw. I did not know that the visions I beheld were unnatural or unusual, or that all others did not see them as well as I. I never spoke of them. I never thought it worth while to speak of them, any more than to speak of the sun going in or coming out of a cloud.

"It is true that my old nurse used to say to her gossips, and in my hearing, that the child—meaning myself—was born with a caul over her face, and was doomed to see ghosts; but I never imagined that the bright and beautiful beings who floated around my bed in the darkness of my chamber were ghosts. I thought 'ghosts' were ghastly pale, white-shrouded creatures in winding sheets. True also that my mother told me angels guarded my bed; but I did not take these beautiful beings to be angels either, because I thought angels had wings. These had none. They were lovely human beings whom I

had been used to seeing all my life, as I was used to seeing my mother.

"I was born and brought up in a haunted house, too—one that had been an old farm-house before the city was laid out, and had been the scene of a terrible domestic tragedy—a wife's infidelity, a husband's vengeance, and a lover's murder. And of course it was said that the ghosts of the guilty wife, the homicidal husband, and the murdered lover 'walked' nightly in the haunted cellar where the crime had been committed.

"I never saw any of these horrible spectres, and I never went near the cellar, or even near the head of the cellar steps, for fear of seeing them. But I often did see, among brighter visions, the form of a beautiful, pale woman, with flowing black hair and drooping dark eyes, whose long trailing white robes were fringed with scarlet.

"These visions ceased suddenly when I was about seven years of age. I will pass rapidly over the intervening years of my life, as I only mean to tell you of its supernatural episodes. My father died, and in due time my mother married again and went to housekeeping with her second husband, leaving me living with my grandmother and household of old family servants in the old haunted homestead. But I went to a day school then, and became deeply interested in my studies.

"The second supernatural episode in my life came when I was fourteen years of age. I went with my grandmother to visit some relatives living down the lower part of Maryland, in the very neighborhood first settled by Leonard Calvert and his companions. More than two hundred years old was that ancient manor-house, in which we were accustomed to pass a few weeks every midsummer. It was a household of women—of a widowed mother and half-a-dozen unmarried daughters. There was not a man about the premises, except the negro men who worked on the plantation during the day and slept in their cabins at night.

"Judge then my horror and amazement on opening my eyes in the solitude of my own chamber and 'in the dead waste and middle of the night,' to behold standing by my bed a cavalier, dressed in the costume of the time of Charles II.—the long flowing locks, the deep scalloped lace collar, the embroidered velvet coat, the satin vest, the trunk hose, the shoes, the bows, and the buckles, all complete! I took one long, astonished look at him, before it occurred to me to scream, but when it did, I woke the welkin.

"Every member of the family came running in. I told them what I had seen; but what I could see no longer, for the apparition had vanished. They searched the room; they searched the house; they searched the yard; but no one could be found. Besides, they said if any stranger had entered the premises, the dogs would have barked, whereas they were all still, therefore no stranger had been about, and therefore I had been dreaming.

"I did not argue with them, though I knew I had not been dreaming. I knew I had seen a ghost, yet I did not believe it, any more than they did! Paradox again!

"However, the next night, at the same hour, I opened my eyes and beheld the same cavalier, who again 'held me with his eye' full a minute before I could open my mouth with the scream that again roused all the household and brought them rushing into my room. On this occasion, hearing the same story, they scolded me well for disturbing them and left me in displeasure.

"The next night the very same thing occurred, except that when I screamed nobody came but my old aunt, who threatened if ever I did the same thing over again to send for a physician to find out what was the matter with me.

"The next day, however, I returned to the city. But now listen! Three months after this occurrence I happened, for the first time in my life, to be in Annapolis, and there in the

State House I saw a full-length portrait of Leonard Calvert. And it was the exact counterpart of the apparition I had three times seen in my chamber!"

"And yet you do not believe in ghosts?" I said.

"Not the least in the world! But I will tell you my next experience. My mother and step-father, with their young family, had moved into a brand-new house, so new that it was not quite finished when they took possession of it. I went to visit them for a week. My room adjoined my mother's, but was on a lower plane. Four steps led down from the intervening door, from my mother's room to mine. These steps with the door at the top were on the right hand side of my bed, whose head stood against the wall dividing the two rooms. At the foot of the bed, a few feet distant, was to be seen the fire-place; on the left hand side of the bed two low windows looking west.

"Well, on the first night I went to bed in this brand-new house I fell asleep and slept several hours very soundly. It was near day when I was awakened, I know not how; but on turning over to my right side, I saw bending over me the form of a little, thin, pale old woman, wrapped from head to foot in a white sheet. Nothing was visible beyond the sheet but her little thin, withered, blue-white face, and her little bony hand, whose fingers, protruding from the white sheet, clutched it together under her chin. I met the gaze of her sunken, bleared blue eyes, and 'fetched a scream' that drove the spectre away and brought down the house upon me. I told them, trembling, what I had seen. They assured me it was a dream. I protested that it was not! They did not believe me! How, indeed, could I expect them to believe in my ghost when I did not believe in it myself, even though I was frightened half to death by it?

"With a little good advice they finally left me to repose. And the next day I myself was inclined to laugh at my vision.

What business, indeed, should a ghost have in a brand-new house, an unfinished house, in a suburban neighborhood? If the old woman's spectre had been seen in the old manor-house down in St. Mary's, or even in the old farm-house, still standing itself like a ghost of the past in the midst of the city, that would have been comprehensible—to believers in ghosts! But in a 'spic and span' new building? It *was* absurd!

"However, the next night I was awakened at the same hour and opening my eyes saw bending over me the same spectral old woman, in the same attitude, the wizened, blue, pale face and dull, light blue eyes, within a few inches of mine. Again my scream roused all the sleepers and brought them into my room. Again I was lectured for disturbing the family with my superstitious terrors. But my fright now was too intense to be trifled with. You will observe that these visions that came to me at this period of my life frightened and distressed me more than those of my earlier days; for, in fact, they were more 'ghostly.' My mother taking pity on my nervousness sent Caroline, her colored nurse, to sleep in the room with me, and I was troubled with no more spectres as long as the girl remained there.

"But it happened one night that one of the younger children was sick and my mother needed the services of Caroline in her own room. I went to bed unattended but unterrified, for I thought the spectre was effectually exorcised. I slept till near morning, when I awoke and turned my head in some dread to the right side of the bed where the ghost had twice appeared. To my great relief it was not there. But what was my horror and amazement, on turning back, to see the little pale, blear-eyed spectre standing at the foot of my bed, between the two posts. The instant I met her dull blue eyes she left her position and glided around to her old stand-point on the right of my head. I shrieked, jerked the bed-clothes over my face and shook as with an ague fit. The family were too

used to my night alarms now to be troubled by them, but my mother came down the steps from her room, bringing a lighted candle in her hand, and sat by the bed and did what she could to calm me.

"The next day, a neighbor called in to see the sick child. Nothing whatever was said about my nocturnal frights, but the neighbor, a Mrs. Edwards, unconsciously gave a key to the whole mystery. Looking around mother's bedroom, where the child lay, she said:

"'This was old Mrs. Eastup's own room; but she didn't die here: she died in the next room, down the four steps.'

"'Whose room?' inquired my mother. 'I did not know that any one had ever lived in this house before us.'

"'Lord, yes, ma'am. Old Mrs. Eastup lived and died here. It was a queer piece of work that.'

"'Tell us about it, please,' said my mother, and I was all attention.

"'Well, ma'am, this house was built by old Mrs. Eastup to suit her own notions of a comfortable home. But the old woman was so impatient to move into it because she didn't like her daughter-in-law that she could hardly wait for it to be finished, and indeed she didn't wait for the paint and plastering to dry before she *did* move into it, and she chose this room to sleep in. But having a whole house to rove around, except the rooms over the kitchen for the servants, the old lady being very whimsical tried every chamber in the house, and sometimes slept in one and sometimes in another, but finally settled upon this room; or rather, I suppose it was while she was staying in this room that she was taken too ill to move about. It was typhoid fever, ma'am, brought on, the doctor said, by sleeping in the house where the plaster was damp and the paint fresh. However, she was too old and feeble to recover from such a disease as that. But just before she died, she took a notion for another move, and she insisted on being

carried into the next room, where no sooner was she laid on the bed than she breathed her last. Bless you, that was only three months ago. Her heirs moved all the furniture away and put the house in a land-agent's hands, and the next thing I heard, it was rented. You don't smell the paint and plastering now, ma'am, do you?'

"'No.'

"'I was thinking may-be that was what made the child sick.'

"'You never heard that the old woman who died here haunted the house, did you?' I inquired with a 'sort of sickly smile.'

"'Lord, no, miss; I never heard any such nonsense as that. If I had I should have put it down.'

"'What sort of a looking old woman was Mrs. Eastup?' I next inquired.

"'Well, my dear, I never saw her until she was sick in bed, when I used to come every day to do what I could for her.'

"'But what did she look like then?'

"'Well, dear, she was a little, slim, pale woman, with thin gray hair and dim blue eyes,' said our visitor, as she drew her shawl around her and got up to go away.

"When she was gone my mother and I looked at each other.

"'The very description of the woman I saw! You know I told you.'

"'Yes,' said my mother, 'but you mustn't believe in ghosts for all that.'

"'I do not,' I answered, firmly.

"Nevertheless I returned to my grandmother's house that same day. Nothing on earth could have bribed me to sleep in that room another night, at the risk of seeing that spectre, which I did not believe in.

"Soon after this came rapid changes in my real life, in the

shock of which my supernatural visions were lost or driven away. First came family reverses that reduced us all to poverty. It became necessary that I should earn my own bread. About the same time another thing happened to me. I was taken to the theatre by an old friend, and saw my first play and got stage-struck. The play was 'Rollo,' and Mr. A. A. Adams took the part of Rollo. Don't talk! Since that day I have outgrown A. A. Adams and all that 'school,' for I have seen all the great artists of the new school. But nothing that has ever happened to me since has ever crazed me as my first play did. It was a pure 'craze,' and nothing less, for I went home and told my pious Presbyterian parents that since I had to earn my bread, I meant to earn it on the stage! To say that they were filled with horror, disgust, abhorrence, despair, would but faintly describe their extremity. One thought I was a lunatic, who ought immediately to be consigned to an insane asylum. Another that I was a lost and ruined sinner, predestined to eternal perdition. I thought so myself, but I wanted to be an actress for all that. And I should have been, too, but—*I fell in love!*

"Yes, I fell in love for the first and last and only time in my life, and with my own dear cousin Paul Howe, who was a young Episcopal minister of the gospel, and was about to go out as a missionary to 'The Devil's Icy Peak,' old Carry our cook used to say; but really to the Cannibal Islands, where they eat missionaries. It was the heroism of the ideal drama that attracted me to the stage; it was the heroism of my cousin's character that finally absorbed me in him.

"It was at a tea-party given by some church people in honor of the Reverend Mr. Howe that I first met my cousin. It would seem strange that I had never seen him before; but such was the fact, for he had been born and brought up in Mississippi, and had been sent abroad to the University of Oxford, where he had graduated.

"He had just returned, taken holy orders, and engaged to go as a missionary to New Zealand. This party, as I said before, was given in his honor and to afford him the opportunity of taking leave of all his friends.

"I saw him there for the first time, a young prince and priest among men; 'handsome as Hercules ere his first labor;' gifted as Apollo; loved, honored and revered as a youthful clergyman of pure character, high genius, and glowing eloquence. He had no equal among men. I knew it then when I was a raven-haired girl of fifteen, and I know it now when I am a white-haired woman of fifty.

"I was a plain little girl, very shabbily dressed, for our poverty had begun to show itself in our apparel; yet in all that brilliant company of ladies and gentlemen he singled me out, and deigned to talk to me nearly all the evening. I never knew until then that it was possible for any human being to be as happy as I was all that night. And when the party was over I went home in a happy dream, because he said he should call and see his little cousin the next day, and find out what she was studying and how she was getting on.

"Well, the next day he called and spent a couple of hours with me, and advised me about my reading. I felt that he took a deep interest in me, and perhaps I mistook the interest —who knows?

"He came the next day and the next. The mission did not sail as soon as it was expected to do, and he lingered in our neighborhood and came to see me every day. The interest he took in me was a purely paternal one. He considered me as a mere child—a very plain but very intelligent child, who would some time develop into a blue-stocking old maid. He never guessed how I loved him.

"Oh, how I prayed to the Lord that Paul would only love me and marry me and take me away with him to the Cannibal Islands! That would realize my most exalted dreams of

heroism and happiness. But Paul had no such thought in his head, and I—I had a rude awakening. He took leave of us to go to Baltimore for a few days, but said he would return before he should leave the country, and that then he should have something to tell me. He said this with so much meaning that I thought of it all the time he was gone. And I even hoped that he was going to ask me to be his wife and go with him to New Zealand.

"The next Sunday afternoon I went to the Episcopal Church. I saw my cousin in the pastor's pew, and I was overjoyed to find that he had returned, and I felt sure that he would come after the service and spend the evening with us. There was a lady seated by his side, a strange lady of between thirty-five and forty years of age, I should judge; but she was quite pretty and interesting, as women often are at that age. She had large, soft, dark-gray eyes, with thick, curly eyelashes, and she had curly black hair parted over her smooth forehead and brought down so that it rippled down her temples and was carried back under her ears. To this day I hate the sight of rippling black hair.

"When the services were over Paul came out of the pew with the lady on his arm, and a crowd gathered around them. I was too shy to approach, but stood afar off and looked.

"And in one annihilating moment I discovered that he was introducing the lady on his arm as his bride, and they were receiving the congratulations of their friends. The church turned around with me and I fell.

"I knew no more for three weeks. When I came to myself, and was pronounced convalescent, my cousin and his elderly wife had sailed for New Zealand. No one ever guessed the cause of my illness, for they talked very freely before me of my cousin's marriage. In the language of the detectives, it was a 'put-up job.' A lot of old sewing-circle grimalkins (heaven may forgive them, but I never will. No! not even

though *my* heaven should depend on my doing so)—a lot of old grimalkins decided that the young missionary should marry before going on his mission; that it was not good for man to be alone, and so forth; as if it were not better to be alone than to be chained to an unloved and unloving companion. And they decided that he had best marry Miss Myrtilla Brown, the maiden sister of their pastor, Dr. Abraham Brown. Equally they persuaded Miss Brown that it was her duty at the ripe age of thirty-eight to marry the young divine of twenty-five. In a word, the match was made by these old tabbies, and my cousin was engaged to his grandmother before he ever saw me.

"I have had a very eventful and a very successful life, but I have never got over that disappointment.

"I have told you about the only man I ever loved. Now I am going to tell you of the only man who ever loved me. And that will bring me to the time when I was interviewed by a ghost.

"It was the year after my young cousin and his middle-aged bride had sailed for the Cannibal Islands that I accepted the situation of a public school teacher in a Western village that for many good reasons must be nameless. I was certainly a very poor teacher in every sense of the word. I was but half educated, as most girls were at that time, and besides, I had no vocation for the work; and I was poorly paid.

"But young ladies were very scarce in that Western village at that time, and I was considered good-looking and attractive. I became very popular. In my first quarter I received three offers of marriage. The first was from a boy-farmer, who owned a great deal of land in the neighborhood; the second was from a fat, bald-headed old lawyer; and the third was from a young pork merchant (by which last you may guess that my village was not very far from Cincinnati). Of course I refused them all and cherished my disappointment.

"But one fatal evening I was invited to a tea-party—tea-parties seemed destined to be fatal to me! I put on my only silk dress, a black one you may be sure, and I went. That was a remarkable tea-party; four of the young women that sat down to the table there have since become famous: one as the pioneer female physician of the country; another as a Woman's Rights' lecturer; another as a novelist; and the fourth—well! modesty forbids me to speak of *her*.

"And there were at least two gentlemen to every lady; there always were at these Western gatherings at that time.

"But in that company there was one little devil who observed me! He was the son of our host; a little, dark, gypsy-looking lad, with raven-black hair, burning black eyes, swarthy complexion and gleaming white teeth. I thought he was about thirteen years old, he was so small; but he was really seventeen, the same age as myself, and he took the liberty of imagining himself to be in love with me.

"He was not a bit bashful, as boys of his age generally are. He paid me at once the most devoted, the most ostentatious, and the most annoying attentions. He insisted on handing me tea, lemonade, peaches and cream—anything that was going, and he generally spilt it over my dress. I was glad enough when the evening was ended, and I could go home and get rid of my little tormentor; not that I disliked him any more than I disliked a mosquito, but I was annoyed by him as I should have been annoyed by the other.

"But I did not get rid of him after all. He took to visiting me every evening, waiting on me; 'paying attention,' as the phrase goes.

"He put on all the airs of a regular suitor. He was in solemn earnest. He meant business, I do assure you.

"One evening I had a touch of my young gentleman's jealous temper. It was during the Christmas holidays, and I was staying with Colonel Andrews' family. The Colonel, his

wife, myself, and Henry Smith, my young adorer, were seated at a round table, playing euchre. Henry was my partner. While we were playing, in walked Mr. Elk, the young pork merchant of whom I have spoken.

"After the usual greetings and hand-shakings, Colonel Andrews asked his guest if he played euchre.

"Mr. Elk answered that he did 'a little.'

"Whereupon, I, looking upon my little beau as a mere child, said:

"'Get up, Henry, and give your place to Mr. Elk.'

"Well, he got up, and I thought so little of turning him off that I never even looked to see where he went. Mr. Elk took his vacated place, became my partner, and the game went briskly on.

"Not until the game was over did I raise my eyes, and never shall I forget the picture that met their astonished gaze.

"There sat my diabolical little lover, squatting on the floor in the corner of the room. His feet were drawn up, his elbows were resting on his knees, and his chin was leaning on the palms of his hands. His little dark face was livid with suppressed passion; his black eyes were blazing like cavernous fires; his lips were drawn back, and his teeth were set like those of some snarling tiger; his glance cut around from the face of his fancied rival to some object that lay upon a table near him.

"I followed that threatening glance and saw what it meant. There was a large pyramid cake standing on the table, and a long carving-knife lay beside it. It was the carving-knife that possessed the dangerous fascination for my little fiend!

"I arose from my place, went quietly to the table, took up the knife, and asked leave of my hostess to cut the cake.

"While I was engaged in cutting the cake, my little demon sprang up and really *hissed* into my ear:

"'Anna! if you marry that pig-sticking fellow, I'll kill him and you and myself!'

"I dropped the carving-knife, and stood aghast! Colonel Andrews picked it up and handed it to me, asking me what was the matter. And before I could answer, my small tormentor had taken himself off.

"Early in January, the term of my engagement having expired, I returned home. I never saw little Beelzebub in the flesh again.

"When and how I *did* next behold him—but I anticipate!

CHAPTER II.

THE LAST MEETING.

What care I for thy carelessness?
I give from founts that overflow,
Regardless that their power to bless
Thy spirit cannot feel or know!

For, lingering on some distant dawn,
My triumph comes, more sweet than late,
When from these mortal mists withdrawn,
Thy soul shall know me, I can wait.—ANONYMOUS.

"I DO not intend to tell you the story of my life, but only such events in it as were intimately connected with the supernatural experiences of which I have spoken to you.

"After my return home, I received several letters from the fiery little monkey who imagined himself my lover, which I took care to answer, lest he might be mad enough to run away from home and follow me to Washington; but I always wrote cautiously.

"At length, to my great relief, he wrote to tell me that he was going as a cadet to the Military Academy at West Point. I was very glad, for I knew that he 'hankered' after a military career, and the discipline there would keep him in order.

"After that our correspondence flagged; finally, it ceased altogether. I flattered myself that he was cured of his severe attack of puppy love, and had forgotten me, as I certainly soon afterwards forgot him.

"Rapid changes took place in my earth life. My grandmother died, and I was left homeless by her death; for my mother and stepfather had enough to do to take care of their large and growing family without being burthened by me, though they would willingly enough have borne the burthen.

"Again I went West and tried my fortune as a teacher; but only to be disgusted with a profession for which I had neither taste nor ability. It was while suffering all the discomforts of a false position that I received the news of my cousin Paul's death at his distant post of duty. He had died childless, and as he himself had been an only child, I was supposed to have become by his decease the presumptive heiress of my uncle's fortune.

"I did not grieve for my cousin's death; for he had died to me when he had married the old maid. Neither did I rejoice at the prospect of being my uncle's heiress; for I did not believe that the prospect would ever be realized, and I was right. It never was realized.

"But it had a most disastrous effect upon my destiny. It was a bait for fortune-hunters. One such, tempted by the rumor that I was the niece and sole heiress of the wealthy Paul Howe, of Vicksburg, sought me in marriage. He was handsome, agreeable, plausible, and belonged to a good family. And I, though I still loved and only loved my cousin, who was dead to me, did not dislike my handsome suitor. I liked him quite well enough to marry him.

"Come! I am not going to speak of one long passed away. The world, who knows or believes it knows so much of my private history, is but too well acquainted with all the incidents of my disastrous marriage. It was of short continuance.

"At twenty-three years of age, I found myself a childless widow—homeless, penniless, friendless, but—FREE!

"Oh-h-h! None but an emancipated slave of conventionality can know all the glorious life of that one word!

"I had never lost my longing for an art life. It was with me a passion, an infatuation! And now that I was penniless, homeless, friendless and free! now that I had to work for my own living, I determined to work in my own way!

"I sold every scrap of lace and jewelry that I possessed, even down to my sole point-lace set, and my watch and charm, and with the proceeds of the sale I went to St. Louis, took board at the cheapest decent boarding-house I could find, but offered myself for employment at the best theatre in the city.

"I was engaged because I was willing to begin at the very foot of the ladder; and I was willing to begin there because I knew I needed years of experience in the 'business' of the art, and that I had patience, earnestness, ardor and genius enough to rise in it.

"Well, my dear, the world knows all about my success; but it knows nothing of the years of toil, study, privation and self-denial that at length secured it; no, nor of the lonely, lonely woman's life within the meteor of the artist's fame!

"Let that pass. I come now to the strangest experience of my whole career.

"In the year 1860 I went to Europe on a professional tour. I need not say more of it than that it was a very successful one.

"I returned in the summer of 1862. Our civil war was in full blast. McClellan was down on the Peninsula.

"I was as much at war with myself as my country was with itself. I had an equal number of relatives on each side. As for myself, my affections and sympathies were with my own native South, my reason and conscience with the North. If it had only been the North that had rebelled and seceded, how

much more hearty my loyalty to the government would have been.

"I entered into no professional engagement that summer, but took a furnished cottage at Glenwood, on the Hudson, and invited my young niece, Amy Mendelsone, to come and stay with me, and help me to entertain a party of English friends who were to pay me a visit that summer.

"So about the first of July a very pleasant party was assembled at Glenwood Cottage. There were the two young Englishmen, Mr. Stanley, a grand-nephew of the late Earl of Derby, and Mr. Grey, a cousin of the Queen's equerry, Colonel Sir George Grey; and there were the Misses Jane and Regina Seward. Besides, my young niece Amy and my youngest half-sister, Edina Heneage.

"It was here that the wondrous incidents to which I have alluded took place.

"It was a glorious Sunday afternoon in midsummer. We had dined at two o'clock as we always did on Sundays, so as to let the servants have their afternoon out.

"After dinner, according to my custom, I had lain down and taken a very long nap, getting up only in time to dress for tea. I am very intemperate in the use of tea, and I drank two or three cupfuls. Between the long nap and the strong tea, I felt completely refreshed and invigorated. I was never more widely awake or keenly alive in my life! I deem it necessary to tell you this, that you may know that what followed was no dream, whatever else it might have been.

"After tea Amy Mendelsone, Jane and Regina Seward, Mr. Stanley and Mr. Grey walked down to the edge of the cliff that overhung the river, and disappeared from my view. Edina Heneage went to an evening meeting at Yonkers, and I was left alone, for even the servants had taken themselves off.

"I came out upon the front porch overlooking the river, and walked up and down enjoying the magnificent scenery of

the Hudson, lighted up, as it was, by the splendor of a midsummer sunset. I watched the sun go down and leave the scene in the glory of the afterglow when sky and water seemed on fire! I was still watching in breathless awe and joy, for I was a true worshipper of nature, when I thought I heard the latch of the gate click.

"I must describe that gate to you, that you may better see the marvellousness of what followed.

"There was a little enclosure of rose bushes immediately in front of the porch. It was fenced in closely, and from the gate to the entrance of the porch ran a brick walk, with a lattice-work fence on each side, reaching from the gate posts to the porch posts.

"Hearing the latch of the gate click, I turned around and saw a stranger enter in this narrow fenced walk and come up to the porch.

"He was a short, stout, middle-aged man, with iron-gray hair and beard; he was dressed in the battle-worn uniform of a cavalry officer, and wore the tarnished straps of a colonel on his shoulders.

"With my heart full of patriotism, I went to welcome him.

"'Mrs. M——.," he said, looking at me.

"I bowed assent.

"'I am Colonel Hartleap,' he said, courteously.

"'I am glad to see you, Colonel Hartleap,' I replied; 'will you walk in?' And I offered my hand.

"To my surprise he did not take my hand, but passed swiftly before me, entered the hall, turned to the right, opened the parlor door, went in and seated himself on the sofa, as if he were familiar with the way. Then he signed for me to sit down on the sofa by him and I obeyed—seating myself at the other end of it, however.

"'It has been a long time since we met, Mrs. M.,' he said, gravely.

"'Yes,' I answered, taxing my memory to find out if I had ever met this man before, and feeling persuaded that I had never seen him nor even heard his name until this moment.

"'A very long time since we met, yet I have never forgotten you.'

"I bowed and tried harder than ever to remember if I had ever seen him before, and ended by feeling more convinced than ever that I never had done so.

"'Immediately after I graduated at West Point, and received my lieutenant's commission, I was sent out to Fort Terror. I wrote to you from thence but I never received an answer. I have passed the greater portion of my life on the Western frontier, guarding the settlers from the Indians of the Plains. In all that time I never received a letter from you, and in all that time I never forgot you,' he added, in a tone of sorrowful reproach.

"'It must have been a very dreary life,' I said, by way of saying something, while I was torturing my brain to discover whether it were possible that I had ever been acquainted with this gentleman's name or personality before. I looked at the bronzed face, the iron-gray hair and beard, and felt perfectly confident that I had never seen him till this hour. I repeated his name over to myself, 'Hartleap?' 'Hartleap?' No! I was sure I had never even heard the name before.

"But I could not tell him so! for in some mysterious way I felt that, though I did not know him, I ought to know him, and that I was in some occult way guilty of his sorrow and deserving of his reproach.

"'Yes, it was a dreary life,' he repeated, 'especially as I had lost all trace of you, though I could not forget you. I never knew what had become of you, never knew that you had married, or had entered upon a theatrical life, never knew anything more about you. And although the name and fame

of Mrs. M—— was familiar to me as to all men, I never knew that she was you until this evening.'

"'And how did you know it this evening?' I inquired faintly, for a vague, unaccountable fear was stealing over me.

"'Why, *as soon as I got out* I came directly to seek you.'

"'As soon as you got out,' I echoed with an expiring voice, for I felt as if I were about to swoon.

"'Yes, just as soon as I got free I came to seek you, for I was determined to see you once more. Now I have seen you I must go. You do not recognize me. But *you will when you see me again*,' he added, as he arose from the sofa and moved towards the door.

"'Do not go yet,' I said. 'It is true that I do not recollect you, but—'

"'You will, when you see me again,' he repeated. 'I must go now,' and he passed out into the hall, I following him.

"The front door stood open, and I saw my young people returning to the house. Amy and the two Misses Sewards came in at the gate, which swung to and closed after them. The two young men paused on the outside, leaning over the top of the gate. Amy entered the hall.

"'Colonel Hartleap, this is my niece, Miss Mendelsone. Amy, my love, this is Colonel Hartleap.'

"I never shall forget Amy's puzzled expression! She looked to the right and to the left and at me.

"'Colonel Hartleap, Amy,' I said, rebukingly, for I felt vexed at her apparent rudeness. 'This is Colonel Hartleap.'

"Amy looked up at the ceiling and down to the floor, and then into my face.

"'Colonel Hartleap, Amy,' I said for the third or fourth time.

"'Anna, are you dreaming? There is nobody here, not a single soul!' cried Amy, in perplexity.

"I pointed to my visitor, standing by my side, as I sup-

posed. But, lo, he had vanished! The man who had stood between me and the front door an instant before was gone! And yet there was no place through which he would have made his exit without being seen to go, without, in fact, disturbing others. There was the front door in which he had stood, there was the straight-fenced walk leading to the front gate, and that front gate was closed and two young men were leaning their elbows over the top of it. Yet so convinced was I it was a man in the flesh I had seen, that I thought he must somehow or other have passed out.

"'Which way did he go?' I inquired.

"'Which way did *who* go, Anna? Why, I do believe you are dreaming still,' said Amy.

"'No, I am not dreaming. Which way did Colonel Hartleap go?'

"'There has been no Colonel Hartleap here, Anna. I really do believe you are still dreaming.'

"'Mr. Grey,' I said, calling to one of the young men who were leaning over the gate, 'has any one passed out since you have been there?'

"'No, madam,' answered the young Englishman.

"'I tell you you have been dreaming, Anna,' said Amy.

"'No, I have not been asleep; I never was more wide awake in my life. I have had a strange visitor. He has vanished. I do not know how he went, or where. Let us talk no more about it, if you please,' I said in a troubled mood, as I led the way into the parlor.

"They all followed, and we had some sacred music, some desultory conversation. About ten o'clock my sister Edina came in from her evening meeting. I had got over my reluctance to speak of my strange visitor, whom I persuaded myself had been a veritable man of flesh and blood, and had gone away in some perfectly natural manner, if we only knew how he had done it. So I told my sister of the fine martial-looking officer who had called on me, and said what a pity it was she had not been at home as she might have caught a beau.

"She laughingly expressed a regret at having missed so good a chance.

"After a little more talk about Colonel Hartleap and his visit, we all separated and retired to our several apartments.

"As soon as I reached my room I dismissed my maid, searched every nook and cranny of my room, locked my door and sat down to my writing-desk to answer some letters that had long been neglected. But try as I might, I could not concentrate my mind upon my work. My thoughts would wander to the strange visitor of the afternoon.

"At length I gave over my task, leaned back in my easy chair, and closed my weary eyes.

"A voice fell upon my astonished ears. It said in a low, distinct tone:

"'You did not recognize me this afternoon. I come now to be identified. Look up and watch me.'

"I opened my eyes and beheld, standing before me, the object of my thoughts and of my terror—the short stout man, with the bronzed face, the black eyes, the iron-gray hair and beard, the officer's war-worn uniform, and the Colonel's tarnished straps—in a word, I beheld Colonel Hartleap!

"I did not shriek or start. Terror had stricken me dumb and motionless. I had not even the power to withdraw my spell-bound eyes from his form. How had he got into my fast-locked room, I could not tell.

"While I gazed and wondered, a stupendous transfiguration took place in his form. Have you ever seen a high flame flicker down into a lower one before going out? Well, just so the stout, thick-set form of the man began to flicker downward and inward. It flickered and sunk and shrunk until it

seemed the form of a youth of fifteen. Then it condensed and crystallized until the vivid impersonation of Henry Smith, the little demon lover of my youth, stood revealed to me.

"Then I shrieked and lost consciousness. When I came to myself it was daylight. I was still sitting leaning back in my easy chair. I awoke with the impression that I had gone to sleep there, and had had a terrible nightmare dream.

"I shivered with cold, though it was a midsummer morning. I undressed myself and went to bed to lie there until it was time to get up; but I could not sleep: I was harassed with the doubt as to whether I had had a dream or a vision. After resting an hour, I arose and rung for my maid, dressed and went down stairs.

"When we were all seated at the breakfast table, I found the newspaper lying where it was always placed by the servant, under my plate. I left it there until I had served all my guests with tea or coffee. Then I took it up and glanced, first at the 'Telegraphic News,' which was always to be found at the head of the first column, on the first page.

"And the first paragraph that met my eyes was this:

"'ST. LOUIS, *Sunday*, 7 P. M.

"'Colonel Hartleap, who was mortally wounded at Fort Donelson, has just died in the St. Mary's Hospital of this city. His stepfather, the venerable Dr. Smith, of Springfield, Ohio, was with him in his last moments.'

"All was clear now, even to the contradiction in the names of Hartleap and Smith. I recollected now that my wild little lover, called Henry Smith after his stepfather, was properly Henry Hartleap, being the son of his mother by her first marriage with Judge Hartleap.

"But the mystery of his appearance to me at the very hour of his death! And the greater mystery of his transfiguration before me in my chamber, by which the man of fifty identified himself as one with my little fiery-hearted boy lover of seventeen summers! Who could explain that?

"I might have created a sensation at the breakfast table by showing that paragraph; but I was too deeply awed to bear all the commonplace exclamations of wonder it would have occasioned. I said nothing about it, but—I made a very slight breakfast that morning, as you may well believe.

"Later in the day one of my young people happened to read the telegraph despatch containing the short account of Colonel Hartleap's death. And then there was a fine hubbub.

"'Why, it is the very man who called on Mrs. M—— at seven o'clock last evening! the very hour of his death, too!' said one to another.

"'I might have dreamed it, my dears, and it might have been only a coincidence,' I said, with a mental reservation like this: it *might* have been, but it was *not*.

"I believe those young people will never cease to talk about it and tell it as a veritable ghost story.

"As for myself, I end my story as I began it. I *know* these supernatural incidents to have happened, but I do not believe them at all, paradoxical as the statement may seem.

"It is done.

"They have all passed away before me—the man I loved, the one who loved me, and he to whom I was married.

"If the inspired Swedish seer was right, and we each shall meet our true mate in the world of spirits, which of the three will claim me? Or will another?

"Some one, I hope, for I would not be alone in the after life as I am in this."

Such was the story told me by Mrs. M., by the fire, one winter night.

THE CHRISTMAS CHILD.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"NOTHING for Mary's Christmas, birthday and wedding-day, all on the same anniversary, and nothing for Mary!"

These words were uttered with a deep sigh by Joseph Man, as he walked homeward that clear, cold Christmas-eve night.

Joseph Man was an intelligent and had been a prosperous carpenter. This night three years before, when just out of his time, he had married and brought home to his house pretty Mary Day. The house and the furniture were his own, and his married life commenced hopefully. He had regular employment in the Washington navy yard, and for two years all went well. There was but one little cloud to overshadow the brightness of their days; they had no children, and no prospect of any. But their mutual love consoled them even for this disappointment.

In the third year of their married life troubles came. Mary's mother and father, an aged couple, fell sick. Their illness was long and expensive, and before it ended in the release of their happy spirits, all Joseph's savings had been spent, and his credit also severely taxed.

Troubles, it is said, never come singly. It was autumn when the old people passed away, and in the early winter there was a heavy discharge of workmen at the navy yard. Two hundred men, in one neighborhood, were suddenly thrown out of employment.

His fellow-men said that Joseph Man was very fortunate in having no children. He did not think so. On this Christmas-eve that we present him to the reader, he had been vainly seeking work—not at his trade, that was hopeless, though he was an excellent joiner; but any work, of any sort, by which he could earn a dollar or two to buy something for Mary. But he was only one of two hundred men that were also seeking work. The sun was setting on the world, and on his hopes as well, when he drew near his house—a lonely cottage, surrounded by a little garden, in the eastern suburbs of the city. As he entered the front gate he was surprised to see a gentleman, wrapped in furs, abruptly leave the premises by the back way. While staring after that mysterious intruder, he nearly stumbled over a basket lying at his feet. Without heeding it, he hurried round to the back of the house, but the stranger had entirely disappeared. He returned and picked up the basket. It seemed full of clothes; but when he examined them he was astonished to find, snugly nestled there, an infant, apparently but a few days old. He carried it immediately into the sitting-room, where a good fire was burning. Mary was not there, nor had he expected to find her there. She had gone to bed at noon with a severe nervous headache, from the effects of care and anxiety. He sat the basket down on the hearth, and began to take off the upper coverings from the child. It was a beautiful and healthy babe, and so fast asleep as to induce a suspicion that it was under the influence of some slight opiate. He sat down and took it upon his lap. It was comfortably dressed, and seemed to need no immediate attention.

"What shall I do with it?" he said to himself. "Glory be to the Lord!" he cried with sudden fervor. "I will accept it. It is a Christmas gift for Mary, and I will take it to her."

He arose softly, and with much tenderness carried it into the adjoining bedroom. As he gently crossed the floor he saw

that his wife was fast asleep. He turned down the bed-clothes, and tenderly laid the child close to her bosom. And now a beautiful and touching incident occurred. The sleeping woman, as in a dream, put out her arm and gently drew the babe closer to her heart. He covered them both up carefully again, and stood and watched them for a few moments. There seemed no likelihood of either waking soon. He silently returned to the sitting-room. What a change had come over his spirit! He was no longer depressed; no longer afraid he should not get work for some months, or that he should be obliged to incur debts he couldn't pay; or that Mary's health would sink under those severe headaches, to which she had in these troubled days been so subject. Had not the Lord entered the house with the forsaken babe that he had brought in? "Whoso receiveth one such little one in My name, receiveth Me." In receiving the babe, he had surely received the Lord. He was afraid of nothing under the sun then. He felt as if he could draw upon the Lord "at sight" for any of his real needs.

A glad voice from the next room startled him.

"Joseph! Joseph! Oh, do come here."

He hastened in. His wife was sitting up in the bed with the baby in her arms, talking to it, crowing over it, delighting in it, as though it had been her own.

"Oh! Joseph, where did it come from? Who brought it here? Whose is it?"

"I brought it here, love. And it is the Lord's. That's all *I* know about it."

"Josey, it's a boy!" she said.

"You don't say so!"

"And his name is Joseph."

"All right, love."

Christmas morning dawned gloriously. Among all the happy people that greeted the day, none were happier than

Joseph and Mary—happy in their baby, a Christmas gift from the Lord.

After the early breakfast was cleared away, Mary sat down to dress her son.

Not until she had removed its innermost garment, did she come upon something that had been waiting for her all the time—a little envelope directed to Joseph and Mary Man.

"Oh, Josey! Come here!"

Obedient, Joseph came, opened the envelope, and to his astonishment and delight found within it a hundred dollar note.

"I knew the money would come!" she said. "The baby has brought it—"

"And the Lord has sent it," Joseph answered.

Nor was that the last good that the Lord sent and the babe brought. Prosperity flowed in upon them from that time. Joseph Man was one of the first men received back into the Government employ, and was steadily promoted, until he became a master carpenter, with an ample and permanent salary.

But, after all, their greatest happiness was in the little child of their adoption. His affection abundantly paid them for all the loving care they bestowed upon him. But little Joe had one trouble—he earnestly desired a sister.

When he was five years old this desire was gratified. Mary Man was blessed in the birth of a daughter. Joseph's delight in his little sister was something to see, not to hear about. He would patiently sit by her cradle for hours together, watching her slumbers. When she began to walk, his was the first hand that guided her steps. He was the ever-willing "horse" to drag her little carriage. As the years passed other children came, until Joseph and Mary were blessed with half a dozen. But though the elder brother loved them all, his little sister remained preëminent in his affections.

The sacrifices that child made for her pleasure! The pun-

ishments he took in her place! The gravest faults of little Mamie were allowing him to take her whippings. But then she was little more than a baby.

As years passed by the elder brother evinced a love of learning that induced his father to give him the choice of a profession. He fixed upon the law, and after two years' study graduated with honor at our National School.

* * * * * * * *

Just one year ago this Christmas-eve, the family were assembled around their fireside. But it was not altogether a happy meeting. The elder brother was, as near as they could compute it, twenty-one years of age. Not knowing the day of his birth, his foster-parents had dated it from the day they found him. And soon now the elder brother was to go from them forth into the wide world.

His own manly ambition urged him to that course; nor could his loving father and mother find it in their conscience to restrain him, especially when a brother of his father, a lawyer in Chicago, had offered him a position in his office.

He was to leave home directly after the New Year. They were giving him plenty of good advice, making arrangements for frequent correspondence and occasional visits. There were two in the circle who would not be consoled. The elder brother was grave even to a deep sadness, which he could not shake off, and Mamie was bathed in tears. At last suddenly she crossed before the fire and sat down beside him, threw her arms about his neck, dropped her head upon his bosom, and sobbed forth:

"Brother, brother, I cannot part with you! I cannot! I have tried to brace myself to it, but I cannot—indeed I cannot! Darling, I must go with you! Father, I must go with him! Mother, I *must* go with him! It does not seem as though only my brother was going, but as if my very life were going with him."

Josey put his arm around her and drew her closer to him, and his voice was choked as he answered:

"Mamie, Mamie, I will give it all up for your sake. I would rather resign all my hopes of advancement than cause you trouble. What! do you think I could go out there and be contented, knowing that you missed me, and grieved for me? No, little darling sister, I could not. Don't cry now any more," he said, kissing her. "Let it all go. What is it? Love is the greatest good in the world. I will stay here and love you, and if I can't get on at the law, at least I can help father at his trade. Come now, we will go back to the old plan. Don't you remember, when you and I were children, we promised each other that we would never, *never* marry, and never, no *never*, part. But when father and mother should go to heaven, and all our brothers and sisters should marry and leave us, that you and I should live and keep house together—old bachelor brother and old maid sister. That was our dream of a happy life, Mamie; and we will carry it out yet. Let the ambition go. Father and mother, I shall not go," said the elder brother earnestly, turning to his parents.

Joseph Man and his wife looked at each other meaningly and smiled.

"But you must go, Josey, darling," said Mamie, with infinite tenderness. "You have given up to me all your life, from the time that mother talks of, when you used to give up your holidays to stay and rock my cradle, and when you used to take all my faults upon you at school, up to the present time, when you often gave up a favorite book to get me some coveted trinket. And now you would give up your life's ambition, because I weep. You shall not do it. Dear heart! great heart! my love of loves! you shall *not* do it! You must go, and I must go with you. Mother, I *must* go with him. Father, I *must* go with him."

Again Joseph and Mary exchanged glances, and smiled.

But Josey gathered her closer to his heart, and bowed his head upon her golden hair, while his bosom heaved with emotion. What could he say? What could he do? He was going into his uncle's house and office. How could he take her there, where he himself would be as a sort of pupil? But she looked up brightly, and with a change of mood, said, as she dashed the tears from her eyes:

"And besides, my good gracious! can't we keep house together in Chicago as well as we could here? Is there any law in Chicago to prevent us carrying out our plan of being old maid brother and old bachelor sister?"

She was interrupted by a hearty laugh.

"Yes, I think there is a natural law everywhere against that arrangement, Mamie," said her father, dryly.

Mamie perceived her mistake, and smiled, but quickly added:

"It is no laughing matter, father. I could not even smile, mother, if I had not made up my mind what to do. Father and mother, he must go, and I must go with him."

"Josey, my boy, you must go," said Mr. Man.

"And Mamie must go with you, my darling," said Mary Man.

Josey looked up in great surprise. As for Mamie, she was not surprised at all. It seemed quite natural and right that she should go with her brother.

"Josey, my boy," said Joseph Man, in a grave manner and choking voice, "there is something I must tell you now, that I never would have had the heart to tell you, had it not been for this wonderful love that unites you and Mamie—this beautiful and pure love that has made you one from your childhood up—this divine love, which I truly believe will make you one in heaven."

Then the good man's voice utterly broke down, and he whispered:

"Tell him, Mary, I can't."

Mary Man arose and crossed to him, sat down beside him, drew his head upon her bosom, and said:

"Dear elder son! dear elder brother; you are ours in the spirit only, but dear to us as any of your brothers and sisters born of the flesh."

He started and looked at her in surprise and perplexity; and then, as the truth grew upon him, with so much agony in his eyes, she suddenly clasped him in her arms and burst into tears, sobbing:

"Oh, my boy! my boy! my darling! my love! my elder son! don't you know I love you as much as ever I can—as much as ever I love either of your brothers or sisters—as much as mother ever loved son, my precious?"

"Oh, yes; but to think that, after all, I'm not your son! I feel as if I had lost everybody at once." And the strong man broke down, and sobbed as though his heart would break.

And Mamie joined her tears and lamentations to his.

"Oh, Josey, my son, don't! You will kill me!" cried Mary. "Haven't I been a mother to you, love? Didn't the Lord send you to me for a Christmas gift? Don't deny me, love. Don't say I'm not your mother because I did not suffer for you as for the others. Listen, my precious!" she said, hugging him closely. "This Christmas eve, twenty-one years ago, I woke up from a sweet sleep and found you nestling close to my bosom. Some one had brought you and laid you on our door-step. But the Lord had sent you; and from the time I woke and found you in my arms I loved you with a love unutterable—a love that it will take all my life and yours to live out. And when, five years later, my little Mamie was born, and you welcomed her with such joyful affection, I knew then that love can grow forever, for then I loved you even better than before."

Josey seized her hand and pressed it to his lips.

"Look up, my darling," she said. "I am your mother, and Mamie is something nearer than your sister—she is your wife. Nor life nor death can sever these ties."

"Nor life nor death *shall* sever these ties," repeated Josey, as he gathered the two Marys in one embrace.

"And now to business," said Joseph Man, cheerfully. "It seems settled that Josey is to go, and Mamie is to go with him. And I don't see, for my part, why we should not have a little Christmas wedding before they go. The mother was born at Christmas, we were married at Christmas, and Josey came to us at Christmas; and now I think, for a good winding up, Mamie and Josey had better be married at Christmas. Yes, certainly, before they attempt to keep house together as 'old maid sister and old bachelor brother.'" Then turning to Josey, he added, "Of course you know, my son, the programme must be changed a little. You will go into your uncle's office as agreed. But you cannot go into his house. He has made no arrangements to receive a married couple. But I have not worked so hard all my life without making enough to set you and Mamie up housekeeping in a plain way. And if you are industrious and economical, as I'm sure you *will* be, I will also give you a little income to help you until you get on in the law. And mind now, my boy, when you return here as Senator, or Vice-President, or President, don't you go back on your old mechanic father."

Before Josey could repudiate this idea there was a knock at the door. Mr. Man arose and opened it.

A gentleman entered—not altogether a stranger to Mr. Man. He was, in fact, the senior partner of an eminent law firm in Washington.

"You wonder to see me here," he said, after the first greetings were over. "You are not aware, I know, that I am the guardian of your ward here, Mr. Joseph Goodwin. I have come," he continued, taking the offered seat, "to ask him to

meet me at my office on the twenty-sixth. He has been of age now for some days. My trust ceases, and I wish to surrender to him the property to which he is entitled."

And to the surprised and delighted family the lawyer told the story of Joseph Goodwin. His parents had died of cholera when the child was but a few days old. He was left to the care of an eccentric grandfather, who, having become disgusted with the extravagance of his sons and daughters, had determined his grandson should be brought up in a frugal and industrious manner, and in ignorance of the great fortune in store for him; he himself had placed him upon the doorstep of the Mans, in whom, from a long acquaintance, he had perfect confidence. He had watched the child until he saw the approach of Joseph Man, and then hurried away. Dying soon after, he left a hundred thousand dollars to his grandson, on the strict condition that it should not be touched for his benefit until he reached the age of twenty-one.

"Though had I seen you pressed by want," said the guardian, in explanation, "I should have advanced money anonymously from my own purse."

On Christmas day Josey and Mamie began their married life for time and eternity. But they did not go West. They bought and furnished a comfortable house on Judiciary Square, in the front basement of which Josey has opened his law office, where he is waiting for practice. He can afford to wait.

A NEW YEAR'S SURPRISE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW RADEN.

IT was the last day of December. The wind sighed and moaned, as if the old year was bidding a sorrowful farewell to earth.

A cold, dark, dreary day. Closer around the mouldering fire cluster a little family.

"Mother, it is so cold. Can't we put another piece of wood in the stove?" asked a shivering little girl of eight years, drawing closer, and bending low over the stove.

"Oh! my pet, not yet. Come, sit in my lap. Let me hug you closely in my arms. I'll keep you warm. There is only a few pieces more. We must save that to make a cup of tea in the morning," the mother said, drawing the frail little one to her, and wrapping a shawl about her. Then pillowing the golden head on her breast, she strove to warm and soothe her to sleep.

"Won't we have a little drop of tea to-night?" the child asked pleadingly.

"Do you want some, darling?"

"Oh! mamma, *so* much. Just a cup, *half* full, and just *half* a cracker. I am so cold and so hungry."

"Mother, give it to her. Yes, my precious little darling, you *shall* have as much tea as you want. Thank God! my work is done. I can buy more tea and more wood. Put up a good fire, Willie, and then we will carry home the work and get lots of money. Six dollars—just think!" said a young

girl, no longer very young, with a pale, gentle, beautiful face—a face on which the lines of care and sorrow had gathered fast.

"Good, nice sister!" the little one said, raising her head and putting up her lips to sister for a kiss.

"*Don't* put so much wood in, Willie—one piece and a few chips. Something might happen, you know, Amy, child; better a little *now* than none to-morrow," the mother said.

"Oh, mother, why will you not have more faith?" Amy asked, reproachfully.

"Why, child, all my life I've been disappointed in all my hopes. You, child—I don't want to hurt you, Amy. But I'll say to-day, and try never to speak of it again. You gave me the greatest disappointment I ever had. Just think, you might have been so rich, and you wouldn't—if you had married Judge Carson—"

"Mother, I do not wish to speak unkindly; but I think our suffering now you may attribute to yourself. You destroyed all *my* dearest hopes. If you had consented to my becoming the wife of the man I loved, he would have taken care of you and yours," Amy said, turning away and looking out of the window.

"Well, I'd like to know, *what* mother would want her daughter to marry a carpenter when she could have a Member of Congress? As poor as I am now (and then we were much better off), I have *some* pride left."

"Pride! Oh, mother. Pride! what kind of pride was that, that you would have your daughter barter her love for position? Perjure herself at the altar for gold? Well, with this old year we will try and cast aside these regrets, and we won't say these unpleasant things to each other again. Mamma, come kiss me, and pray that I may have good luck. By-bye, little May. Sister will bring you home something nice—what shall it be?"

"A big red apple, Amy. Will it cost too much? I ain't had a big apple, and I ain't a little one for *so* long," May said, her wistful blue eyes growing bright with the thought of the coming treat.

"You shall have it, love; and an orange, and—"

"Amy, child, you forget the rent is due again to-morrow. Mr. Gray won't wait any longer. You must pay all you get to him, except about a dollar. Save that to buy some wood and a little tea. Oh, my good Lord, have mercy on us! Amy, there is neither meal nor flour, and only a few spoonsful of sugar, in the house," the mother groaned forth.

"Don't worry, mother. Come, Willie; I will get what is necessary, and I will go to see the owner, not the agent, of this house to-morrow, I will find his heart, and he will have mercy on us," Amy said. Again kissing little May, she hurried out with Willie.

After a long walk, they entered a fashionable street, and stopped at the door of an elegant house. Willie, with his eyes dancing, pulled the bell, and turned to Amy, saying, in a quick whisper:

"Sis, you'll buy me an apple too, won't you? Six dollars is lots of money!"

Amy smiled and nodded her head, as the door opened.

"Is Miss Mason in?" she asked.

"She is very much engaged; I don't think you can see her," answered the servant, scanning quickly Amy's humble attire.

"I will thank you to go and say to her I have the work she ordered, and wish to see her about it," Amy said, in such a gentle, but firm manner, that the man, who started to do her bidding, turned back and said, in a very different tone:

"You had better walk in, Miss; it is very cold," and, closing the door, preceded Amy and Willie down the hall to a door, which opening, he said:

"Please take a seat in here, and I will speak to Miss Mason."

Amy was getting quite impatient, so long she had waited Miss Mason's coming. It was growing quite dark, then, when she heard footsteps approaching. The door opened, and the young lady glided in, saying:

"You must excuse my detaining you; the hair-dresser was with me, and I have just escaped from her hand."

Amy opened the box she held and took from it a very elegant smoking-cap.

"Oh, how very, very handsome! The embroidery is exquisitely done. I did not think it would be near so elegant. And the slippers?"

"They are finished, and, by your direction, at Foster's. I would have called and brought them to you, but—"

Amy hesitated. She did not like to say she had no money to pay for them.

"Oh, never mind. I will send John for them," answered Miss Mason. "How much am I to pay you?"

"Six dollars."

"Yes. Well, I'm sorry, Miss Howard, but I have not the money now. I really forgot to reserve it for you, there are so many demands on one's purse these times. But to-morrow—no; we receive, and shall be very much engaged all day. Well, say the next day, if you will come or send, I will have it for you."

Amy could not speak. She stood trying to utter some words to tell of her great need—of poor, sick, suffering little May, so cold and hungry, too.

"You must excuse me now. I am going to a party this evening, and my dressmaker is waiting to make some change in the trimming of my dress," Miss Mason said, smiling very sweetly, and holding the door open for Amy to pass through.

When out in the hall Amy turned. She had made up her mind to ask for a portion, no matter how small. But the young lady ran lightly up the stairs, and poor Amy, almost heart-broken, went out of the door. She could restrain her tears no longer. She was sobbing as she went down the steps.

"Hush, sis!" whispered Willie, as two gentlemen came near, and, hesitating an instant, passed on up to Miss Mason's door.

Slowly Amy went homeward. How could she hasten? What had she to carry? Nothing, nothing! Poor little patient May! for her disappointment Amy grieved the most.

"Oh, how thoughtless the rich are!" she cried. "What would a few dollars, saved from the abundance showered around them, have signified? To me it would have been everything—life, perhaps. Oh, what will I do? I cannot return home! I cannot! Oh, Father of the fatherless, have mercy on us! Help me to help my loved ones!"

Scarce had the cry escaped her lips when a quick step approached her.

"Miss Howard! Amy!"

She turned.

"Amy, dear Amy, do you not know me?" asked a tall, fine-looking man, extending his hand to clasp hers.

"Yes—yes. I knew you directly, but I could not speak, I was so—"

"Glad or sorry, Amy?" he asked, still holding her hand.

"Surprised, George."

"Oh, you dear, prudent little girl. Non-committal. Well, *I'm* so glad to find you, that I shall hold on to you for a while," George answered, drawing her hand within his arm, and still retaining his clasp of it. "How cold you are! Now, shall I tell you how I came to find you? Well, I met you coming down Mr. Mason's steps. I did not recognize you, but

both Philip Mason and myself saw that you were weeping. When we got in, Philip inquired of a servant man who the young lady was that had just gone out. He gave your name, and, although it is not a very uncommon one, my heart told me that it was my little Amy. Never mind, it is of no use for that little wing to keep fluttering. I'm not going to let you fly away. I was a foolish fellow eight years ago. I know better how to act now. Well, I made Philip go try to find out more about you, and so he did; and, I told him, you were a near relation of mine."

"Oh, George!"

"Well, you ought to have been years ago. And you will be, before long. As sure as my name is George Manly, you shall be my own little wife, and very soon too—"

"George, you do not know how changed I am. No longer young—"

"Hush, love! Have I not grown older too? And if you are changed sadly, I must blame myself for it; for I never ought to have minded your saying nay. Instead of going off and striving to forget you, I should have won your mother over, and have made you both happy long ago. But I must finish my story. Philip told your name and business, and off I started to overtake you. Now what were you crying about? You must tell me, Amy."

"Oh, I was so miserable! Miss Mason did not pay me. And, May! dear little May! I wanted—Oh, I can't tell you! indeed, I can't!" Amy sobbed.

"Amy, May is not the only one that is suffering, I fear. Child, why will you not confide in me? There is no one in the world that loves you better. Let me help you, dear. I want to loan you as much money as you need."

"No, no, no," sobbed Amy.

"Very well, dear, as you will. Can I come to see you to-morrow morning—a New-Year's call, Amy?"

"To-morrow morning I am going to see our landlord, George, to try and get him to wait a little while. We hope to get a little legacy from Uncle John's estate, enough to pay our debts. I'm going to tell him this. The agent will have no mercy on us. He is going to put us out," Amy said. And then she exclaimed, "Oh, I did not mean to tell you this!"

"Who is the agent, dear?"

"Brownson."

"And the owner of your house?"

"I don't just know; but it has been lately purchased by a contractor, a very wealthy man, I've heard. So, you see, he cannot want the money."

"Oh, I know; I heard of the sale. This is the house, is it not?" asked Amy's lover.

"Yes; and now you must say good-by."

"Not until I tell you where you can find your landlord. Here, I'll write it down. No; it is too dark. You will remember: on —— avenue, No. 96. You must go early; now, good-night." He drew her nearer, kissed her, and catching Willie by the hand, stepped quickly off with him, saying:

"I'm going to give this little man a New-Year's gift. Run in; it is too cold for you. And Willie can't come back until I let him. Now in with you, little love!"

"My big apple, sister—please, sister!" called out little May.

"Willie will be here with it presently, love," Amy answered, for she felt sure he would. She knew the dear boy would think of May, and care for her above himself.

"I felt something dreadful would happen," said Amy's mother, looking very dolefully at her child.

"Yes, it is very hard, mother; but keep up a good heart. I am astonished at my own cheerfulness."

The little story-teller. Astonished, indeed! Had she not

enough to make any girl cheerful? The knowledge of possessing the love of one of the truest and best men living!

Mrs. Howard was still sighing and groaning when Willie came in, followed by a man bringing a large basket filled with all the good things that Willie and George could think of. Apples and oranges for May. A fine turkey, cranberries, and nuts, tea, sugar and—such a splendid big cake. "I picked it out myself," said Willie.

"Oh, Willie! How could you?" cried Amy.

"Well enough! He said I must tell him all I wanted, because he was just the same as my brother. He was going to be soon—"

"Hush, Willie!"

"Oh, Amy, he is the jolliest brother that ever was. That fellow that brought the basket has gone back to bring a go-cart full of wood, and I've got five dollars to buy just what I choose, and I'm going to buy a smile from mamma. Here, give me one and a kiss! You dear, sweet mamma! That's it. Now, here's your money," said Willie, capering about.

"Amy, what is the meaning of this, child?"

"Mother, George Manly has done this. He found Willie and me by accident. He carried Willie off to give him a New-Year's gift—and this is it," Amy said, quietly.

Mrs. Howard made no reply; but the anxious, care-worn look passed away, and there was no more sighing from her heard that evening. Little May, made warm and happy, fell asleep, smiling sweetly in Amy's arms.

And Amy—gentle, dutiful Amy—soft, sweet smiles played about her lips all that evening, and when the old year passed out that night, it carried with it all the sadness from the dear girl's heart. She *knew* the New Year would bring happiness to those she loved, and more than all, to her. "George loves me still," she often murmured.

The next morning, early, she went to the office, where she should find the landlord, as George had told her.

With a trembling heart she knocked at the door. It opened quickly, and George Manly stood before Amy.

With a surprised look she stepped back.

"Come in; it is all right, Amy. Here is a paper the man fixed. You can give it to the agent, and that will end all trouble about the rent."

"Oh, did you speak to him for me? How kind! But I wanted to explain to him all about it myself. Can I see him, to thank him?" said Amy.

"Yes, you can see him as much as you choose, and the more he sees of you the happier he will be. That is the reason he could not resist the pleasure of having you call this morning," George said, smiling and looking the personification of happiness.

"What *do* you mean, George?"

"That your landlord, little lady, is your most devoted lover and suitor. Now not another word from your lips about this. There is the receipt. Send Willie with it to the agent. Now I am going home with you to mother. Perhaps the dear old lady's heart won't be troubled so much when I tell her I've laid the saw and the plane aside, and she can call her son-in-law a banker, if she chooses."

"Oh, George! how good you are! I wonder that you have not loved some one else long ago," Amy said.

"Bless you, dear love, I tried to, ever so many times; but you were fixed so firmly in my heart, I could not cast you out. I am going now to tell your mother about it, and then, Amy, I want you to prove you think I am worthy of you. I want to be married to-day."

"Oh, George! How can I?"

"Very well, love. You can do any getting ready that is to be done afterward. We will take the evening train for New

York, where in a few hours you can have the trousseau completed. In the meantime our home will be put in order to receive us on our return, and mother and Willie will come to us there."

Amy's remonstrances were at last quieted, and Mrs. Howard gave a very willing consent. And so the New Year brought great joy, not only to Amy, but to all she loved.

After an absence of two weeks, George Manly and his bride returned to their beautiful home, where Mrs. Howard, Willie, and gentle little May were waiting their coming. George Manly often tells Amy she came to him as the best New Year's gift in the world—a true and loving wife.

FLORRY'S NEW YEAR'S RECEPTION.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

MABEL CLIFTON sat before one of the windows of her father's magnificent mansion. A servant stood in waiting. She was making out a list of articles wanted for the next day. Coming footsteps arrested her attention. She raised her eyes from the paper and looked out. The crimson flush deepened on her bright young face as "Oh!" in a tone of deep regret, escaped her lips.

She turned, after an instant of thought, and said:

"John, I am not just ready to finish this list, and shall not send for an hour yet. If you have anything to attend to in the meantime, you can do it."

Mr. Clifton had been reading in a distant part of the room. Hearing the door close after John's departure, he asked:

"You have not forgotten to send for those wines I spoke of, my dear?"

"He has not gone yet, papa."

"Ah, well; do not make it late. They will be very busy to-night," her father said, turning again to his paper.

"Papa!"

"Well, my dear?"

"A boon, papa. Promise to grant me, this last day of the year, my boon."

"What is it, love?"

"Promise to grant it first."

"Not in ignorance, my child."

"Trust me, father."

She had an earnest, eager, noble look in her eyes that her father did trust in, and he promised her.

"Well, well; you shall have your way."

"Father, let us have no wines to-morrow."

"What! No, no; I cannot grant you that. No wines! Why, child, have you gone crazy? For twenty-five years past I have offered my friends wine on New Year's day, and never have felt that I was doing anything wrong. What has come over you?"

"Oh, father, I never have felt just right when offering young men wine; and just now, when I was making out the order for John, I chanced to raise my eyes just as Edgar Livingston was passing. It needed but a glance to see he was very much under the influence of wine. Father, his mother is a widow; he her only child. All her earthly hopes are in him. Will they not be wrecked, think you, if he indulges in the wine cup? To-morrow he will make many calls. Beautiful women will offer him wine. He will not have the courage, possibly the wish, to decline. To-morrow night, most likely, then, he will return home to fill his mother's heart with sorrow. I wish not to contribute one drop to that bitter cup."

"My dear, whether we have wines or not, with him it will be all the same, as you say he will make many calls."

"Father, if you had a son, you would feel differently. Think how many young men of the brightest promise have failed, nay, worse, won truly disgrace and early graves from the love of wine.

"I feel as if Edgar Livingston stood on the brink of a fearful precipice. Father, stretch forth your strong arm to draw him back—if only one step, and for a moment. If we do not save him, it will be a comfort to think we urged him not forward on his fatal course—"

"Mabel, you are very deeply interested in the young man. Am I to conclude—"

"Nothing more than for his own and his mother's sake. I would endeavor to save him, or any other young man in his danger, father. Here will be one of his first calls. Possibly I can detain him long enough to prevent his visiting many places where he would be exposed to great temptation. O', father, please grant me this!"

"Really, dear, I feel disposed to do as you wish, but so many will be very much disappointed. Besides, I have not the courage to make this great change, and set five hundred tongues to work speculating about the cause of it. Some will declare I'm about to fail; others that I have grown penurious. Ah, what is it, John?"

Just then the servant entered and handed an envelope, saying:

"A telegram, sir."

Mr. Clifton tore it quickly open, read it, and exclaimed:

"Really this is too bad! But I must go. John, here!" And hastily writing a few words for a return despatch, he handed it to the servant, and turning to Mabel, said:

"My old friend Hartwell is dying, and begs that I will hasten to him. I cannot deny him. So you will have to entertain my friends to-morrow, and explain the reason of my failing to see them, the first time for so many years. And—well, dear, you can do as you choose about the bill of fare. As I shall not be home, the folks will not hold me responsible for what happens in my absence."

"Oh, thank you, papa, for permission to do as I choose. I will willingly take any unkind remarks, if any one feels like making them. But I feel confident that all who have sons will give me their kindest wishes for withholding temptation from their boys. And to the young men I shall try to make myself so agreeable, and have our cook make the coffee so very

fine, that they will go away quite as well pleased, and with their brains a good deal clearer, than if I had entertained them with wine."

An hour after, Mr. Clifton was on his way to the side of his dying friend.

Mabel sat down and wrote:

"MY DEAR FLORRY:—Come help me receive our friends to-morrow. Papa has been called away. I must have you with me, as I am particularly anxious to have my reception a success. "Lovingly, MABEL."

"Edgar likes Florry, I can plainly see, and I think she is not wholly indifferent toward him. Together I think we can manage to hold him here to-morrow, and thus save his mother a great sorrow, most likely," said Mabel.

Mabel Clifton was one of the loveliest girls in P——. Friends wondered that her heart had not yielded to some one of her many suitors. They did not know she had no heart to yield to any of those who sought it.

The first season she appeared in the select circle her father's wealth and position placed her, she met Ernest Addison. He was a noble-looking man, talented, with mind and heart alike filled with good, true resolves. To Mabel he had been very attentive, and she grew to love him, feeling sure the time was not far distant when he would come to tell her of his love. But months rolled by, and he spoke not. Gradually his visits grew less frequent, until they ceased. What it was that had come between his love and hers she could never think; but she felt perfectly sure he *did* love her, and so, hoping that time would solve the mystery and bring a balm to her wounded spirit, she watched and waited for the coming.

New Year's day came beautiful and bright. Mabel and her friend Florry never looked lovelier. Mabel had explained her wishes, and fully infused her own spirit into her fair friend.

It was impossible for an indifferent person not to feel their powers of fascination. To Edgar Livingston, who was one of their first guests, they were quite irresistible. He lingered on, notwithstanding the many efforts of a young friend who accompanied him to draw him away.

"*Do* stay and help us," said Mabel, and when Florry's beautiful eyes repeated the wish Edgar yielded.

Few, if any, went from Clifton house dissatisfied. Everything that heart could desire, or mind suggest, in the way of delicacies and luxuries of the season, Mabel offered her guests. But as her father had said, many tongues were busy speculating about it, and in a few hours it was widely known that Miss Clifton was having a "temperance reception."

Eagerly Mabel's eyes sought the door on every new arrival of guests. She had hoped for the coming of one. But the hours passed, and when it grew late in the day the hope faded, and almost died out. She had seated herself wearily in an arm-chair, when the same greeting that had fallen on her ears so many times that day, "Happy New Year, Miss Clifton," caused the bright light to return to her eye, the beautiful flush to her face, as she rose to receive Ernest Addison.

There was an expression in his fine eyes, when he received from her the fragrant cup of coffee, that relieved the suspense of years. Her heart was bounding with new hope.

Edgar Livingston had drawn Florry to the window. They were looking out on the passers-by. A few moments, and reeling along the sidewalk, shouting and singing a drinking song, came Edgar's companion of the morning.

Florry turned from the sickening sight. Edgar followed, saying:

"But for you and Miss Clifton, I might have been one of that party."

And going up to Mabel, he said:

"Miss Clifton, your slumber to-night should be very peaceful. You have not helped to cloud either the brain or heart of any of your friends to-day. Accept my warmest thanks for having saved me from feeling both."

Edgar saw an expression in Ernest's eyes that made him think it would be quite as agreeable to all parties if he would take Florry back to the recess of the window, to the piano, or anywhere out of hearing, just then.

A few moments after his fine voice was blending with hers in a well-chosen duet.

Then Ernest told Mabel of the love which had been hers since first he knew her:

"I came one night to lay my heart before you. You had many guests, and offered them wine. You noticed not that I placed my glass untouched on the table. I left early. I dared not woo the heart of one who held such a fearful temptation before me: why, you will know when I tell you the terrible truth. My only brother went down to a drunkard's grave, the woman he loved urging him on.

"For a time mother and I had won him from his fatal passion. He was doing well. We believed he would fulfil the bright promise of early youth. He grew to love a beautiful girl. She was wild and thoughtless; and one night, at a party in her father's house, she urged him to drink.

"'One glass. Every one but you takes wine,' she said.

"He resisted. She taunted him about having to abstain entirely because he had not the self-control to use wine in moderation. He yielded, accepted the fatal glass from her hand, and drank, first moderately, then on and on in the old fearful way, until the end came—a ruined life and a mother's broken heart.

"Do you wonder that I fled from you? Every hour since yearning to return, yet daring not.

"To-day I heard what you were doing. Earnestly thanking God that light had dawned upon you, I hastened here to lay

my heart before the only woman I have ever loved. Will you be my wife, Mabel?"

Her heart was too full of joy—she could not tell him in words how happy she was; but her little hand lay still in his. She raised her eyes a moment, and he saw the love of years beaming there. He needed no other answer.

Judging from the low tone into which the voices in the other room had fallen, I think some other hearts had found their mates. But the pairs were separated, or rather joined again, by the return of Mr. Clifton, who entered, calling out:

"Mabel, my dear, to me these rooms look rather dark. Let's have the gas turned on, if you please."

"Certainly, papa."

And when there was light enough for Mr. Clifton to look into his daughter's eyes, he saw a brighter light shining there. Another moment, when Florry came to greet him, he said, with a sly smile:

"Ah, I see why you young folks knew nothing of the surrounding darkness—guided by the light within. Well, have you had a pleasant day?"

"A *happy* day, father; there are no regrets to steal in and mar it," Mabel said, with a bright smile.

"I am glad of it—glad of your resolve, Mabel. How glad you will know when I tell you that this morning I closed the eyes of a father whose only son was away in some drinking saloon. How my heart ached for that dying father! And what a balm it was, to think at that time my daughter was not holding the fatal glass to any young man," said Mr. Clifton, his voice trembling with emotion.

Before another New Year's day, Mabel and Florry each presided over an establishment of their own. The happy remembrance of their receptions is never clouded by the thought that they have added one drop to the cup of bitterness which so many wives, mothers and sisters have to drink—that cup of sorrow which is so often prepared for them by sister women.

OLD COALS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

IT was a stormy November day. A beautiful girl stood at the window of a very humble-looking house, gazing up and down the narrow, dreary street.

"Oh, dear! *Surely* it is time he should be coming." Notwithstanding the wind and the rain, with these words she opened the window and looked out, up and down the street.

"Here he comes! Oh, now if he has not letters for me I think it will make me ill." Her little hands were pressed over her heart, and with a deep-drawn breath she turned her gaze again up the street to watch the progress of the carrier, as he came along, buffeting the wind and driving rain, hurrying along, stopping now and then with a loud peal at the bell across the street, then over he darted to the house next her, where, after a thundering knock, he stood impatiently stamping. They were so long coming to the door. How could she bear the suspense? Ah, they come at last. With something like a growl—the carrier runs down the steps—yes, and passes the door. She cannot believe it. There *must* be one. She is about to call after him, when, yes—thank heaven! he turns, looks at a letter he holds, then up to meet the beautiful, eager face, and inquires quickly:

"Miss Eva Trevor?"

"Yes, yes! Give it me. Thanks," she answered, clasping her treasure to her heart, and closing the window to return, shaking with the cold, to the fire.

"You'll ketch your deaf, child—den dar!" called out an old negro woman from the next room.

Directly after she came in, she brightened up the fire, and then stood waiting while Eva read her letter. She knew well enough *she* would hear the news too.

Presently Eva said:

"Oh, mammy, I am so—so happy! Here, listen—" And she read to the faithful servant the contents of her letter.

"Now, you know, I am to go to the young lady, one hour, three times a week, and then her mother (Mrs. Johnson) will pay me liberally, I know. Then, through her, I may find other pupils."

"Yes, honey; Ise glad too ef you is; but de Lord knows I nebber spected to see dis day when you hab to teach the pianny for a libbin."

"But I mout hab knowed it. Anybody wid half-a-eye mout. When I seed Marse Herbert gwine about, nebber takin no notice of nuffin, looking so sorry like—I profsizes den, dat trouble was comin. Den, when I found out, 'bout his dorsin of t'other people's paper, *den* I knowed for *sartin sure*, we would all of us go to de poor house, an we is mighty nigh it now, honey. To think of dem aligators takin of de berry house from ober our heads. Miss Eva, honey, do you know who it is dat owns de 'Hall' now?"

"No, mammy, it was purchased by an agent for another person," Eva answered.

Mammy turned away with a deep groan, and was about leaving the room, when Eva called:

"Mammy! Tell me, have you something nice for uncle's dinner?"

With a deep-drawn sigh, the faithful old woman shook her head. When Eva's face grew sad and very anxious, she said:

"Don't you worry, honey. Marse Herbert gone out to 'vide some 'visions, I know. Yes, honey, he's gone to 'spose of his watch. My eye was on him when he looked at it so long and sighed so hard—much as to say, 'dis is de last time I will look at you.' Here Marse comin' now! Don't look so sorry like, Miss Eva."

A tall, dignified, and very handsome man, apparently of about forty years, entered the room, followed by a boy bringing a basket.

"Here, Peggy, put away these articles," he said.

And after the boy was sent off, he went into the next room, and in a low voice said:

"Take care of these things, my good Peggy. I mean make them last as long as you can. We have to economize a little now, you know."

With a sigh he turned away.

Eva's bright face and loving greeting might have chased the sigh from Herbert Lindon's heart, had not his sorrow been deeper than the loss of wealth could cause.

The next morning Eva stole away and presented herself to Mrs. Johnson, whose kind reception relieved the timid girl of all embarrassment. After hearing her play one or two selections, Mrs. Johnson declared herself charmed, and most fortunate in securing her services as teacher for her daughter. And when she named the price of tuition, the grateful girl was so delighted with her liberality, much more than she had dared to hope, she exclaimed:

"Oh, thank you. But is not that too much?"

"No, my dear. I should have to pay as much to a master; and I would sooner have my daughter under your charge. I am sure of your capability—and—"

The lady hesitated. Eva looked up. The tears stood in her eyes. Eyes very beautiful, but sad then. Eva wondered she had not noticed before how very lovely her patron was.

"You are very like one I knew and loved long years ago,

my dear," the lady said. And Eva thought her voice trembled as she spoke.

"I am very like my mother and her family, so many tell me, and as I can see myself from a picture I have of my dear mother."

"And her name—what was it, dear?"

"Evelyn Lindon. Was it her you were speaking of? Perhaps you knew her?" Eva asked.

"The likeness was not to her, my dear. Ah, excuse me a moment. I must find my little girl and bring her to you," the lady said, hurrying out.

She did not return with her daughter, who came in after a few minutes, and said:

"Mamma will see you before you leave. She is engaged now."

After the lesson was over and Eva was about going, Mrs. Johnson came in. She was looking very pale, and Eva noticing it, said:

"I fear you are not well. You should not have come down again to see me."

"I am well, my dear. I wanted to see you again. Your face is like a picture, bringing back to memory days and scenes that have passed and were so dear. I feel as if I could not let you go," the lovely lady answered.

"But I shall come again soon."

"Yes, and often. Come as my dear little friend, as well as Lilly's teacher."

"I shall be so glad!" Eva answered, as she pressed her lips to the beautiful ones offered her in parting.

"Strange! strange!" murmured the lady, as she turned away. "And now my heart is throbbing so wildly! Why could I not have asked the dear child the question, the answer to which would have brought me peace? Or—or—nay, I will not think of that. I will hope on."

Eva sat on a stool at her uncle's feet, her sunny head resting on his knee.

"Uncle, next Thursday will be Thanksgiving, and we will have a treat of some kind, will we not? A ride, or a walk, or a nice dinner?" she said.

"Perhaps. I will try, my little sunbeam. I ought to be happy and profoundly thankful that I have you, my darling. What should I do without you?"

"What would we do without each other, uncle? But I don't mean for you to have anything to do with our Thanksgiving treat. Mammy and I will manage it. Now, darling uncle, won't you smile? Oh, I can remember long ago, when I could not have been more than six years old, of an uncle who was always smiling. Why did you grow so sad? Tell me—do. I am old enough to understand now, and it will do you good to tell your sorrows to some one," the sweet girl urged.

"Eva, love, I know it is cruel in me to shadow your young life with my sorrow. I have striven against it, but cannot banish from my heart the cloud that gathered there just thirteen years ago. I will tell you, dear. That day, then, was Thanksgiving, and I was to have won the crowning blessing of a man's life. It was to have been my wedding-day. In those days, Eva, when I often smiled, as you say, I was quick and hot-tempered—ay, and a demon ofttimes possessed me. I was jealous, child; I could not bear to see another clasp the hand pledged to me, nor to have her smile even away from me. And this it was that drove my darling from me. I thought I was sure she loved me so well, that from me she would take the oft-repeated chidings, and never rebel. Ah, I overrated my power; I stepped too far. *Could* she have loved me? I have often questioned. A few days before the one appointed for our union we were at a party. Laughingly she said:

"'This will be my last chance to enjoy myself with perfect

freedom. Now this night, Herbert, let me give to my friends; the future will only be for you.'

"That night there was present a distant cousin, of whom I had often heard her speak in almost loving terms. I had heard he loved her madly once. She danced often with him, leaned upon his arm as he gazed upon her with undisguised admiration. I could not bear it. It drove me wild. I went up. I knew not what I said. I drew her away; and then, after many cruel reproaches, to which she listened pale and quiet, she bade me take her home.

"I have never seen her since. The next morning she wrote to me, breaking our engagement, and saying she could never trust her happiness to one who had so cruelly and publicly insulted her. For a few days my insanity lasted. Then I sought her, to throw myself at her feet, and entreat her forgiveness. I found her not. They told me she had gone to Europe. I followed her there; sought her far and wide. When, six months after, I obtained tidings of her, hope fled forever. She was married to an old and immensely wealthy man, a friend of her father's—one who had known and loved her for years. I have never heard of her since. Now, Eva, darling, you know mine is a sorrow not easily cast aside. It was the one love of my life."

Uncle Herbert ceased speaking. Eva pressed and kissed the hand she held; her silence expressed more sympathy than any words she could have spoken.

"Yes, mammy, I *must* have a *nice* Thanksgiving dinner, I tell you; and I'm either going to sell my watch, or I'll go and tell my kind friend all about it, and ask her to advance me some money. I don't know just which yet. I'll see. I'm going now to give a lesson."

"Don't sell de watch, honey. Keep *one* in de house, for de spectibility of de family," Peggy said, following Eva to the door.

The lesson was over, and Eva waited, as the little Miss had urged her "to see mamma."

Soon the lady came in.

"I've been out, making some preparation for Thanksgiving," she said, with a sigh. "This little one wants to be merry. To me, the day has many sad memories."

"I'm sorry, so sorry, to hear you say so. I think folks ought to feel differently. But so it is with my dear uncle. He is always more sorrowful. Thanksgivings—"

"What is it, dear lady? You are ill?" cried Eva, springing to her friend's side, untying her bonnet, and drawing off her wrappings.

"No, dear, it's only some little heart-trouble I've had for a long while, and I'm quite tired now. You were telling me of your uncle?"

"Yes, about his being so sad on Thanksgiving days. And if I *only* could, I wish so much to have something nice for him that day. You know we are poor *now*. We were rich once, only a little while ago. Would you—"

Hesitating, trembling, blushing, she stood.

"Yes, certainly, my dear. I intended to have paid you last time. It is customary to have the tuition fee in advance, but I forgot," the lady said, taking out her pocket-book, and placing in the little trembling hand a roll of new, crisp notes, stopping the happy girl's thanks by saying:

"I wanted to have you with us that day. Can you not come?"

"Oh, thank you! I cannot leave uncle Herbert. If *he* only would come with me, *then* I would gladly," Eva answered.

"If you could tell me more of your uncle. Would you mind, dear? I used to know one who knew him well," the lady said, turning away her face to speak to her little girl, who still lingered.

"You can go now, Lilly, if you choose. Run out and get the fresh air."

"Oh, perhaps, you knew the girl he loved so dearly?" Eva quickly asked.

"I knew one that was his promised wife many years ago: I knew her here and afterwards in Europe."

"Where is she now?" Eva asked.

"She was in Switzerland three months ago. And he, your uncle, has never married," the lady said.

"Oh, no, for he has never loved but her. How could she have left him—my noble, loving uncle?"

"He wronged her, dear. And while mortified and full of anger she fled from his reach. Afterward—not out of spite, as some believed, but for her father's sake—she wedded one who was ever a kind and devoted husband, and when he passed from earth she truly mourned for the little child's father."

Paler the lovely lady grew as she spoke, and Eva exclaimed:

"You *are* too sick to talk. You shall tell me no more. Only one word to take to uncle Herbert. Is she *free* now?"

"She *was* when I saw her in Switzerland, three months ago."

"Oh, then, thanks, dear lady: he will find her, his dear and only love. But, nay, that cannot be," Eva murmured.

"Why, my child?" the lady whispered low.

"He is *poor* now—too poor to find, too poor to woo his love."

"But she is rich enough for both," the lady said, a beautiful soft blush spreading over her lovely face.

And when Eva, still shaking her sunny head, asked:

"*How* could he woo her now?" her friend answered:

"Bring him to me Thanksgiving. I will teach him how. Tell him how you found me, and that, when I knew your

name, I told you of the girl he once loved; that I knew her; that at any time, if he wishes, I will help him to find her. And tell him *more* than this: tell him she is free again—that is, she *was* when I saw her last—if he still loves Louise, to come to me—Thanksgiving."

"Uncle, listen. So much I have to tell, news so good, so sweet, I think. But first your forgiveness you must promise me, for I've been naughty a wee bit in keeping anything from you," Eva said, with her arms around her uncle's neck. And then she told him of having advertised for pupils in music, of the one answer she had received, and of the lady's kindness. And on she went, watching his face as it glowed and paled, catching the sighs and kissing away the tears that told how constant and true his heart was still.

"Her name—the lady's name, my child?" uncle Herbert asked.

"Mrs. Johnson, uncle, dear."

"I know her not."

"But you will go. She has been *so* kind. We must not be rude, you know."

"Yes, darling, we will go to her. But I shall never find my love—I so poor, and she so rich. How could I seek her? Now, now I grieve for the gold that is gone. Oh, if the wealth was mine, and she had none, I would hunt the wide world over to find my love," he said.

And naughty, loving, tell-tale Eva carried these words to her friend, who, smiling through her tears, said:

"We will make him smile again to-morrow, dear. He will be happy, I think—I trust."

How busy the little love was that blessed day! Mammy fixed a nice lunch for them, and was well pleased that they were going to dine "wid dem's equals," as she expressed it. Eva stole away the evening before to purchase a pair of beautiful kid gloves for her uncle.

"How handsome my darling uncle is!" she thought, as she arranged his lavender tie, and handed the gloves to correspond.

Very beautiful was Eva's friend that Thanksgiving-day, as she watched and waited for her expected guests. She heard their coming steps, and quickly glided within the curtained window.

A moment more and she hears Eva's light tread ascending the stairs, and then she gazes with an eager look in her beautiful eyes, through the lace folds of the curtain.

Herbert Lindon has entered the drawing-room. Eva will soon follow, the lady knows. She must not lose those precious moments. His back was toward her. With noiseless steps she crossed the room, and stood close behind him.

"Herbert!" she spoke, in a soft, love-tuned tone.

He turned with a cry of joy and extended arms.

"Louise! forgive! forgive! Oh, my darling! dare I hope?"

"You cannot doubt me, Herbert. Did not I promise you should find your love, if you wished?"

"My own, my beautiful, peerless love!" Herbert cried. Then putting her gently away, he groaned:

"Nay, I have no home to offer now, Louise."

"Doubting again," she said, with reproach in her tone. "Give me back my old place in your heart, Herbert. That is the dearest place on earth to me. There is my home. And we will go back to the 'Hall.' Here, love, 'tis yours again."

From a table near she took a paper and placed it in his hands.

Eva came running down the stairs.

"Oh," she cried, "you are with my uncle!"

"Yes, dear, and uncle is with his love," uncle Herbert said, with such a warmth of joy in his voice.

"Did I not promise you he should wear the old smiles again?" Louise said.

"But I thought—"

"Yes, love, you thought your uncle's Louise was in Switzerland. She was three months ago, but returned in time to save our old homestead, where we will all live by-and-bye. Is not this a happy Thanksgiving-day, little Eva?"

Laughing and crying, hugging and kissing, first one, then the other, was Eva's answer.

"Thirteen years ago, Louise, you were to have been mine. How much longer have I to wait for my bride? Oh, if I dared hope—"

"Hope everything, Herbert," Louise answered low; and no longer he hesitated to speak his wish.

There was a quiet wedding that Thanksgiving night, with no invited guest but the faithful Peggy. Eva ran away to bring her, that she might share their joy.

"Thank God for giving me back my love," Herbert said.

"Yes, thank our Blessed Father for his mercy and forgiveness in restoring us to each other," Louise answered reverently.

"Yes, bless and thank God for all his mercies and goodness; and every day of our life should be one of Thanksgiving. But this one more than all others, one of praise. Oh, my heart is almost bursting with joy and gratitude," Eva said. Yes, her pure loving heart was sending out its thanksgiving anthem, and the chorus was joined by the happy ones near, and the thousands abroad praising and blessing Him, from whom all blessings flow.

A HORRID DISCOVERY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"ARE you *sure*, Miss Spicer?"

"Sure! Well, as certain as seeing and hearing. I *saw* him *fall*, and I *heard* folks by say he had been drinking. I'm not one of those kind of people what goes about telling that Miss So and So said Mrs. somebody else told *her* she saw and heard such and such things. *I* only tell what *I* saw and heard *myself*," answered Miss Content Spicer, compressing her thin lips, and looking as if she was fully conscious of having done only her Christian duty, in coming to poor little Carrie Andrews with the information that her lover had just fallen flat on the street intoxicated.

"Oh, dear! I wish I was in Heaven!" sobbed Carrie.

"There, now, Carrie. It ain't a bit of use for you to carry on so. Men ain't worth no sich worrying. But, dear me! I shouldn't have thought this would have taken you back so. Now just tell me. You know of course *I* shan't say anything about it. I think too much of both of you. Have you never before—And, besides, you know, he is a member of our church. Have you not suspected this before?" Miss Content Spicer asked, lowering her voice, and drawing her chair nearer to Carrie.

"No. Well, I will tell you," answered the poor child.

She wanted some one to confide in. She had neither mother nor sister. And so into Miss Spicer's ear she whispered her sorrow.

"I *have* suspected many times that Charley was fond of *wine*, and I've cautioned him about it. But I never dreamed anything like this. Oh, how miserable I am!" sobbed Carrie.

"Don't do it, child. Don't grieve yourself about the doings of men. When I see and know what dreadful creatures the men of the present day are, I'm more than thankful I thus far have chosen to remain single. Content by nature as well as name, I tremble to think how I should feel if—"

"I know what you mean," said Carrie—"if your son—"

"Son! My son! Hümph! I am a little older than you, Carrie—old enough to be married, may be. Yes; you mean, of course, if in the future—well, there is no knowing. We cannot pledge ourselves for the future. Perhaps there may come by a man worthy to win me, and then I can't say but I might be foolish enough to yield to his entreaties."

"Oh, Miss Spicer, I don't believe you ever will. If you did not marry when men were better, and you younger—"

"My dear, excuse me," said Miss Spicer, not looking very content just then. "I believe we have wandered from our subject."

"Oh, yes; but I am thinking of it every moment. Well, of course, it is all over between Charley and me. It is not as if he was a youth. He is a man, and old enough to know better. He is full ten years older than I—"

"Indeed!" interrupted Miss Spicer. "I had no idea he was so near my age. As you say, if he was a very young man I suppose you would feel as if you might influence him. But here comes your brother."

"Oh, Frank, tell me about Charley!" Carrie cried, springing forward to meet her brother.

"Well, I left Dr. Wilton with him. He is more comfortable, I guess, now."

"Oh, Frank, is it not dreadful? Just think how it may end!" Carrie said, her eyes full of tears.

"I know it. I've told him the danger of it. Only an hour before, when we were in a saloon, I cautioned him," answered Frank.

"Had he been drinking?"

"Certainly. What did you say, Miss Spicer?"

"Some one calling you," Miss Spicer said.

"Oh, well, I only ran in for a moment to let sister know. Good-day—Oh, I forgot, Carrie. Please pack my valise, for a trip of three or four days. I have to leave for Boston, this evening, on business for the store. Charley's accident almost drove it from my mind."

When Frank was out of hearing, Miss Content said:

"Now, my dear, I am very glad your brother knows all about it. I felt rather badly about telling it. But, of course, as it is generally known, I feel relieved. Well, I must be moving. I have several other calls to make. And you will have to be getting your brother's things ready for him. Good-by. Keep up a good heart. Men ain't worth worrying about, take my word for it." And Miss Spicer, leaving Carrie to do her brother's packing, and grieve over the terrible news she had brought her, the spinster made her way to the home of the principal of the firm where Charley Osborn was a clerk, from thence to visit the wife of one of the elders of the church she attended.

The next morning, when poor Carrie's eyes were red and swollen from weeping nearly all night, she was surprised by a visit from Mrs. Addison, the wife of the elder, and an old friend of Carrie's mother. She said:

"My dear child—ah, I see how this thing has troubled you. I was in hopes it was a falsehood. People will talk so. And Miss Spicer is not very reliable—"

"Now, I think it was really unkind in Miss Spicer. She promised not to say anything about it," interrupted Carrie.

"You may imagine how surprised we were; it was *so* unexpected, was it not?"

"Sudden; but I had been fearing it," Carrie answered, in a quivering voice.

"Some men are very sly about their drinking. But don't take it so hard, dear. Better to know it now than after you were married," said Mrs. Addison, trying really to offer some comfort.

This lady had just taken leave of Carrie, and walked a few steps from the house, when she met the daughter of the proprietor, whom Miss Spicer had visited the evening before.

"Is it true, this dreadful story about Mr. Osborn?" she inquired.

"Too true. Poor Carrie! she is quite overwhelmed with grief. But from what I can understand, he has been very sly—drinking at a dreadful rate for a long time," Mrs. Addison replied, with a sad shake of her head.

"Well, I think I'd better not go see her now. I think *I* should not want to see folks at such a time, if I were she. I am going by the store, to tell father. He would not believe it. Go with me, and tell him what Carrie told you. He said Miss Spicer was a regular old mischief-maker and slanderer. She ought to be proved right for once, poor thing," Bessie Hamlin said.

And so they went to satisfy Mr. Hamlin of the truth of the statement made by Miss Spicer, to the effect that Charles Osborn had fallen down in the street in a fit of intoxication. She had seen him fall, and had heard Frank Andrews tell his sister he had been drinking.

"Well, he has hid it for a long while. I never once suspected, although I know he has a very red face often. Well, I have always made it a point to employ only temperance men. I must think of this," said Mr. Hamlin, gravely.

Charles Osborn was very ill for a few days. When convalescent, he wrote a little note to Carrie, saying:

"DEAREST:—Not a line even from you to comfort me during these long-suffering hours! Why not? Let me hear from you. I trust to be able to come to you in a few days.

"Yours as ever, loving and true, "CHARLES."

This made Carrie cry a little. But she had made up her mind to do the right thing, she thought, namely, to dismiss Charley from her home and heart! The latter she knew would be hard. But "better to suffer the heartache now than have it broken in the future," she thought.

"I will have it all over before Frank returns. He shall not know how much it costs me," she said.

And so, in answer to Charley's note, she wrote:

"It will not be agreeable for me to receive you. After what has happened, you could scarcely expect it. Accompanying this, you will find the keepsakes you have given me. Please return mine at your earliest convenience.

"Your friend, "CARRIE ANDREWS."

Carrie had written six notes, and destroyed them before she could suit herself. It was so hard to disguise her suffering. But this she thought was just right.

"Whew! What has come over her? I suppose she is hurt, perhaps, that I did not write sooner. I wonder why Frank has not been round. He could explain this," Charley said.

By the bearer of Carrie's note he wrote:

"I shall certainly come to you, Carrie, dear; and you must explain what is all a mystery to me.

"As ever yours, "CHARLES."

The next day came two more notes to Charley, which surprised him even more than Carrie's. One from his employer—stating that under existing circumstances he did not feel justified in retaining a young man addicted to such a very objectionable habit.

The other from his pastor, asking when it would be convenient for him to have a talk on a very serious subject, with him. Until after which, of course, he (Charley) would not feel like coming to the communion table.

"Dismissed by my lady-love—from my church—and by my employer! Well, troubles are coming thick and fast. Two of these, I think, would have about killed me; but the third will make a perfect cure, I know. They are all either after the wrong person, or laboring under some mistake. For certainly I cannot feel myself such a dreadfully objectionable person, somehow," Charley said.

That evening Frank returned, and called immediately on his friend, who, after a cordial greeting, spread before him the three letters.

Frank read first Mr. Hamlin's with a look of surprise on his face, which deepened as he read the next from the reverend gentleman. When he turned from Carrie's, the expression was intense, and he exclaimed:

"Have they all gone mad? And who or what has set them so? This is too bad. Instead of your friends rejoicing over your recovery, and sympathizing with you for your suffering, they want to finish you. I'll sift this matter before to-morrow night."

The next evening, Charley was sitting for the first time in the parlor, when Frank came in, bringing with him Carrie, who cried:

"Oh! *can* you ever forgive me, Charley?"

Charley had just time to give her a very forgiving embrace, when the door opened again and Mr. Hamlin came in, rushed up, and caught hold of Charley's hands, exclaiming:

"*Can* you forgive me, my boy?"

Before Charley could answer in rushed his pastor, and with his arm around him, he asked, his voice full of regret, the oft-repeated words:

"*Can* you forgive me?"

At length Charley, his face beaming with good humor, said:

"I don't know what you all mean, I'm sure. I had supposed I was the offending party. I have been puzzling my brains to determine what was my crime."

Each waited for the other to speak. At length Frank said:

"Carrie wants forgiveness for believing you had fallen in the street, while under the influence of liquor."

"And I, for acting upon the same belief," said Mr. Hamlin.

"I must plead guilty of the same hasty decision," the minister added.

"How could you? Either of you?" Charley asked, with a tone of reproach in his voice.

"Oh! it seems so clear!" all exclaimed.

"Who told you, Carrie?" asked Frank.

"Why Miss Content Spicer. And, Frank, when you came in, I asked you had Charley been drinking, and you said, 'Yes, certainly,' and you had cautioned him against it," answered Carrie, adding, "and it was what *you* said made me believe her."

"And what my wife said, that Miss Carrie said, made me believe Miss Spicer's story," said the minister, smiling.

"And what my daughter said, that you all said, made me believe the spinster's slanderous tongue. I told them what she was, but they talked me down," Mr. Hamlin said in an exultant tone, as if he had quite released himself from any blame.

"Well, well, this is rich! And where it would have ended if I had not returned in good time, I cannot tell. I remember your asking me, and my being sent out just at that moment by Miss Spicer to see some one who was calling me, but I never found him."

"But you said, certainly, he had been drinking, Frank."

"And certainly he had. And he knows that was what caused his fall—that is, so the doctor said—"

"Drinking?" exclaimed both gentlemen.

"Yes, drinking—too much ice water and going in the sun," Frank answered, laughing heartily.

"She knew better," Charley said.

"We all ought to have known better. But, somehow, it seemed so clear," Mr. Hamlin said.

"It will be a lesson for us all—to believe every one innocent, condemning none until proven guilty," Charley's pastor said.

And when all were gone, Carrie lingered a moment, and whispered:

"Can you forgive me for fanning the flame Miss Spicer had lighted?"

"Freely, darling. But won't you promise in future, instead of fanning the flame, you will put out both the fire and its kindler? In a word, drop Miss Spicer and all of her kind," Charley urged; and Carrie felt so repentant that she promised.

HERBERT ASHLEY'S LITTLE WAIF.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"GOOD Heavens! What is that you have got there, Herbert?" exclaimed Mrs. Ashley, as her only son, a young man of twenty-five, came into his mother's reception room, holding by the hand a little girl of about seven years.

"Why, mother, your own eyes can answer that question. What is the use of looking so wildly at the child? Poor little thing! she needs comforting, not questioning," answered Herbert a little petulantly, seating himself and gathering the little wee thing up in his arms, saying, "There, there, don't tremble so, baby; no one will hurt you. You are *my* child now, and I'll take care of you too." This in a firm, decided tone.

Mrs. Ashley was still gazing, if possible, more amazed than ever by her son's words and manner.

Just then the door opened, and in floated a vision of beauty, grace, and gossamer drapery. She started back, held up her hands, and cried out:

"Mercy! What is that? An infant witch? Where did you pick her up, Herbert? In the woods, dropped by her mother witch, in her ride on a broomstick through the air?"

"Georgia, for shame! How can you talk so? You frighten the child."

"Frighten *her?* I declare, if I was with her alone I should be frightened! Dear! what wild eyes she has! Don't let her come near me, Herbert, please," continued the dainty beauty, with affected concern.

"Georgia, I think your words and manner unkind and unwomanly—"

"Thank you, sir."

"Well, I do. You see here a poor child who should claim your sympathy and kindly care, and still you talk and look as if she was some wild animal."

"It is a human then—a child, hey?" asked Georgia.

Truly the wee thing had a strange, wild, unchildlike look; a little, thin, pale, dark face, almost covered by the long uncombed black hair which fell over it, and out of which gleamed the wildest, largest dark eyes. Herbert pushed her hair gently back, and laid her head soothingly against his broad breast.

"I'll tell you about her, and perhaps I'll find your hearts, which must surely have escaped your keeping," Herbert said, looking from Georgia to his mother sternly.

"You have heard me speak of the old violinist in Second street. Well, this morning, in passing there, I saw a crowd, and went in to inquire the cause. The old man was dead, and this poor child almost wild with grief and fright. They were about to carry her off to the Alms House, Home of the Destitute, or some such place. She saw me—and really I do believe mine was the only face there that expressed any sympathy or pity for her; at any rate it must have been so to her, for she ran to me and cried out, 'Don't let them take me, please!'

"And I would not. There, that is about all of the story, except that I sent off the crowd, closed the door, found an undertaker, gave him money to bury the old man somewhere other than in the potter's field, and came home with the child, and intend to try and comfort her as best I can for her grandfather's loss. Now are you either, or both, going to help me; or have I to go and put her in some boarding-school? I've made up my mind to do one good action, if never before or again, and I'll go through with it."

There was rather a contemptuous expression on Georgia's fair face, and Mrs. Ashley said:

"Really, Herbert, you need a guardian—some one to hold your purse for you. In your boy days, you used to be ever doing some such wild trick—bringing home or finding some paupers to care for—spending your money most foolishly. But I had thought years had brought you wisdom, discretion—"

"Say heartlessness, mother; that will better express it, I guess. What I've done to-day in spending money has not amounted to as much as last night at the opera, and the supper after. Shall I take the child away?" he asked.

"Are you determined to keep her?" was the question in reply.

"As long as I live, and she wishes to remain."

Mrs. Ashley saw the determination glowing in her son's fine eyes, and answered:

"Then, choosing the lesser of evils, I say keep her here."

"You will be kind to her, mother?"

There was entreaty and command both in his words and looks.

"What is your name, child?" Mrs. Ashley asked, coming forward and trying to speak pleasantly.

"Avonia. Grandpa called me Avon always. May I stay? I'll be very good. Please!"

Under the kind care of Mrs. Ashley's housekeeper, who was always glad to do Herbert's bidding, little Avon grew out of her wild looks, and was no longer the "ugly little witch" that Georgia called her.

Herbert Ashley was one of the wealthiest young men in P——. He had a fine mind and talents; still had never accomplished anything in life. Having more money than he knew just what to do with, of course there was no necessity for his earning more.

Georgia Clayton was a distant cousin, and a great favorite with Mrs. Ashley. It was her dearest wish that Georgia and Herbert should be united, and Herbert had acquiesced in her wish. Georgia was beautiful, and as he loved no one else, he had offered his hand to his mother's pet, and been accepted.

But Georgia was too fond of her freedom, and being admired, flattered, and courted by many, to agree to be married very soon. And so they had been engaged quite six months when little Avon became one of the family.

The child's devotion to Herbert was wonderful in one so young. If a shadow rested on his brow, in a moment it covered hers, and her lips would quiver continually until she found a chance to whisper:

"Are you hurt? Has Avon hurt you?"

If Herbert grew sick, she would neither eat, nor be won away to play with the neighboring children—only linger by his side, or hide somewhere in his room.

Georgia disliked her. In truth, she did not want any one else to share Herbert's love; not that her own was so great, only because she was exacting and jealous. Little Avon was frequently the cause of discord between Herbert and his betrothed; at times the latter declaring that Avon should be sent away. But Herbert remained true to his determination, his affection for the little friendless orphan bringing forth the noblest impulses of his nature.

Time passed on until five years had gone by, and still the marriage was postponed from time to time, Georgia being better contented to have it so, certain of her lover's constancy, and he leaving the arrangements and the time to his mother. Several times he had rather urged their union, but when Georgia pleaded for longer delay, he comforted himself with his books and little Avon's singing. Wonderfully the child could sing; and the master that Herbert had procured for her

predicted a brilliant future for Avon, if Herbert would resign her to the musical world.

As Avon advanced in intellect, and grew daily more entertaining and lovable, Georgia's dislike grew greater, until it came to an issue—that Herbert should give up one or the other. Avon must be sent away, or Georgia would immediately break her engagement.

Now we can well think that Herbert was not a very ardent and devoted lover, or he would not have waited so patiently all those years for Georgia, when there was no reason for the postponements from time to time, but only her whims. So when Georgia commanded him to send "his child," as he called Avon, away, he declared that under no circumstances would he give her up—that no one in the world loved him as truly as did that child, and he would be true to his self-imposed charge.

Somehow this stormy interview was either heard, or came to Avon's knowledge, and Mrs. Brown the housekeeper went to Herbert with an anxious manner, and told him Avon acted so strangely, that she feared she was either ill or in great trouble. Herbert bade the good woman watch their charge closely. That night she came again to Herbert, and drew him hastily to the window, in time to see a little figure stealing quietly down the garden-walk. In a second Herbert was after her, and followed unobserved and closely behind. On and on she sped, down to the river, beside which she stopped. The moonbeams shone brightly on the little pale face upraised to heaven, as she knelt a moment, and cried:

"Forgive, forgive, please, Father in heaven! Pity and forgive! What else can I do? Friendless but for him, and his happiness I must secure!"

She sprang forward then to the little rustic bridge, from which Herbert knew she intended to leap. Quickly after her, only just in time to draw her back, fainting in his arms.

For many days she lay tossing wildly with fever, hovering between life and death.

While watching over the little one so dear, there came a terrible blow to Herbert and his mother. All their long enjoyed possessions were swept away—all gone in the fearful crash of '57.

Georgia very soon relieved her friends of any anxiety on her account, by accepting and marrying a young attaché who had been dangling about her for several months.

Avon slowly came back to health, strength, and after a while to cheerfulness, when she saw that Georgia's loss did not grieve Herbert at all. In fact he seemed relieved by her marriage.

In the days that followed, Herbert found it very necessary to put his shoulder to the wheel, to obtain the means to support his mother, Avon, and himself in comfort. The grandeur of other times had to be resigned, and poor Mrs. Ashley, ever sighing, had to try and accommodate herself to the change. So, intent in his pursuits, Herbert failed to notice the many mysterious and confidential meetings between Avon and her old music-master.

Two years more passed away, and when she was over fourteen years, little Avon was missing. Days passed into weeks and months, and all inquiries, searches and advertising proved of no avail. Avon was lost.

Bitterly Mrs. Ashley spoke of her ingratitude, saying that when the time came that the girl could have returned some of their kindness, she had deserted them.

A little note she left for Herbert, blotted by her tears, telling him that through her great love and gratitude she had left him. She could no longer burden him with the care of her; that if with him, she knew he would not let her work too, so she had fled; but not to be uneasy; she was safe with those who would help her to work, and protect her from harm.

Thus three more years passed, bringing no more tidings to the anxious heart of Herbert Ashley. Often he felt as if he must start and hunt the world over for his child. And this he would have attempted, most likely, had he possessed his former wealth.

From across the ocean came accounts of a new star of unsurpassed beauty and talent in the musical firmament. All Europe proclaimed her the Queen of Song. A few months more, and the papers announced the glad tidings that our States should have the pleasure of welcoming the wonderful singer. The night came for her first appearance. Herbert Ashley had thought not of going. In fact he spent but little money in such treats, finding ready use for every dollar then.

However, that afternoon, much to his surprise, he met, quite near his place of business, old Master Corsini, whom he had not seen since the time of Avon's disappearance. The master pressed him to go to the opera, tendering him and forcing him to accept tickets for himself and mother—reserved seats, which the old man said had been given him, and which he should not use, as he had been engaged by the managers for some duty during the evening.

So Herbert and his mother found themselves seated in the most desirable part of the opera-house.

Never had P—— welcomed such a glorious voice; and never did an audience more fully express their appreciation.

Herbert Ashley's eyes had never once wandered from the lovely prima donna. As one entranced he sat.

When the opera was over, and the audience wildly calling for the queen of beauty and song, she came forth, to be almost covered and hidden by flowery tributes. Still remaining, still motionless, only gazing on the form so familiar, yet so strange, Ashley made no move to retire until his mother aroused him by saying:

"Come, Herbert; we are almost the only ones left. Has

your mind been entirely carried away by this beautiful singer?"

He turned and asked:

"Mother, who is she?"

"Why, are you crazy? Does not the programme in your hand tell you?"

"No—yes—"

Just then Master Corsini came to them, and said:

"Come with me, I beg you. An old friend waits to see you."

They followed. Another moment and the beautiful girl was clasped to Herbert's bosom, as he cried, in joyous welcome:

"Avon, my little child! found at last!"

The triumphant ending of Master Corsini's labor was more than the old man's feeble strength could long bear. The joy of having the world acknowledge his little pupil's worth was too great. Soon after his return to the city from which he had taken her less than four years before, and ere their engagement there was concluded, Avon's dear old friend and teacher had passed from earth.

She could not travel again without a friend. "A master" she must have, she said, and plead with Herbert to be her guardian again.

He could not resist her—he never could in other days. But he knew not what heart-trials he would have to bear. When the proudest sons of his own and other lands knelt at her feet and wooed her, he would turn in agony away, lest the time had come when he must resign her to another's love.

Dearer daily she grew to him. What was the love of years gone, to the love of the present? He had thought his little child was dearer than any other could ever be. But oh! what was such affection to the feeling which filled his heart

then? Yet the time must come sooner or later, when Avon would be won from him.

One young man to whom his darling had seemed kinder than to all others, came and begged for his influence to gain a favorable reception from the lovely Avon.

"Why not?" thought Herbert. "This man is worthy of her in every way. As well him, or better perhaps, than any other."

And so he promised to help the suitor. And so to do, he sought Avon.

"He is worthy of you, my child."

"Yes, I know it," she said. "But I do not love him."

"Can he not win your love, my child?"

She shook her pretty little head.

"He worships you, Avon. You will never find one more worthy."

For the first time in her life she seemed angry and rebellious to her guardian, and with eyes filled with tears she cried out:

"Why do you try to make me love any one? You are tired of me. You—you don't love me any more, I know."

"Avon, my child, do not talk to me thus. You know not what you are doing—how fearfully you are trying me," Herbert said, his voice broken and full of emotion.

"Then why will you try to send me from you? Once you would have kept me at any cost. Why not now? Let me stay with you. Guardy, send him and all others away."

"Avon, my child, I do love you as dearly—oh, if I dared tell you. But, my little one, a day must come when you will learn another love than that you bear for your old friend. And then I shall have to give you up. Oh, my child, go; run away again; leave me before I forget your youth and my age—forget all but my—"

"No, no, Guardy. Herbert, I will not go. Tell me how

much you love your little Avon. Do you think it is half as much as her love for you?"

"Hush, child! Tempt me not."

She was at his feet, her beautiful eyes eagerly searching his.

"Tell me if more than mother, father, all on earth, Guardy—do you love me thus?" she whispered.

"My Avon! my little child! next to God, who sent you to me."

"Then keep me, Herbert. Forget all and everything but Avon's love, which is as your own. I have never loved but you."

And so Herbert Ashley's day of reward came. Little Avon brought him more than the wealth of other days; and better far than that, she gave him her heart's true and only love.

A DANGEROUS SLIP.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WHAT a splendid-looking fellow!" exclaimed a brilliant, sparkling brunette, as the door closed after Bertram Roland.

"Positively the handsomest man I've seen in P——. I've a mind to try and cut you out, little Ruth. If it would not be rather uncousinly, I'd be tempted to set my cap."

"I'm sure you would succeed, Jem.; for, in the first place, Mr. Roland is not an admirer of mine that I'm aware of; and if he was, after meeting you I'm sure I should soon be forgotten."

"No, no, you demure little bird. You are just one of those that nestle around and steal into a man's heart so quietly, that he knows nothing about it until you have such a sure hold there that no one, not even the most beautiful girl in the world, could cut you out. I declare you would be a most formidable rival. I'm not a bit afraid of these acknowledged belles and beauties; but preserve me from a sweet, gentle, lovely, womanly little girl as a rival," Jem. answered, glancing with a well-satisfied expression into the mirror opposite. Seldom ever mirror reflected a more beautiful face.

Jem. Forrester was truly a girl to charm, enchant, bewilder and render very miserable the man who might win her. Vain, spoiled, capricious and wilful she was, but so wonderfully beautiful that those who knew her could almost forgive her faults because she was so fair to look upon.

"Ruthey, little coz., would it hurt you if I win him?" Jem. asked, with an arch look in her dark eye.

Ruth's fair face flushed deeply as she answered:

"It would mortify me to see a relative of mine trying to attract the admiration of any gentleman."

There was a flash from the dark eyes, and a look that spoke as plain as words, "I'll pay you for this, my lady."

Little Ruth had told the truth when she said she was not aware that Bertram Roland was an admirer of hers. But not the whole truth, dear little girl! She would have been the happiest maid in the world if she could have believed that this handsome, noble man, as she always thought him, cared for her. For she had loved him since the first day they met. A few weeks previous, when out walking, she had slipped on the ice and been so severely hurt that she could not stand up. In agony she raised her eyes to meet those of Bertram Roland.

"Let me help you," he said in a tone full of sympathy; at the same time with that gentle, earnest, determined manner that one cannot resist.

Ruth Morely's hand was placed confidingly in his. And when he had raised, and was still supporting her, he said:

"I shall place you as comfortably as possible in the store opposite, while I obtain a carriage. Give me your address, please!"

He was a stranger, and she in a strange city. But she could, she must trust him. A glance up into his beautiful, earnest, honest eyes was enough, and Ruth said:

"Mr. Easton's, No. — Sixth street. He is my uncle; I am visiting there."

An expression of agreeable surprise passed over the young man's face.

"I know your uncle, Miss Easton."

"My name is Morely," Ruth said; and taking from her pocket-book her card, handed it to him. And so began their acquaintance. Quite romantic enough, I'm sure. After Mr.

Roland had taken Ruth home, it was only polite to call and inquire after her health. This he had done half a dozen times; and I think was getting to think little Ruth Morely the sweetest and most lovable girl he knew, when the beautiful, sparkling Jem. came to visit her uncle, too.

Poor Ruth, her heart was sorely troubled. And she did wish—how could she help it—that Jem. had just remained at home. Still, the gentle, placid face gave no sign of her anxiety. Jem. had "set her cap," it was plain to see. Few men could resist such beauty and grace. When bright eyes grow brighter at their approach, and rosy cheeks deepen their hue, does it not please them? It did Bertram Roland. He liked to have folks show their feelings. At times he had been piqued that Ruth received him just in the same way she met Mr. Brownson, her cousin, Kate Easton's lover. And when, on two or three occasions, he had carried her the sweetest little bouquets of rare flowers, her "Thank you" was so quiet! Why could she not have said more?—raised her eyes to his, and let him see that she was pleased?

He had a mind to see if he could not win better treatment from Jem. Yes, he would, just to see how Ruth would like it for a while, any how. He had no doubt but Jem.'s heart was given to some lucky fellow long ago.

Little Ruth was not in the parlor one evening when Mr. Roland came, or I think he might have found it not so easy to pass her by, and give to Jem. the beautiful flowers. But when once done he was in for it. After that, the bouquets went where they were appreciated, as he thought.

"For me!" Jem. exclaimed, her eyes brightening as she caught the flowers and pressed them close to her lovely face.

"How beautiful! Thanks! I love flowers so dearly, and —and—" her rosy cheeks grew rosier—"I like you ever so much for giving them to me."

She held them long, finding new beauties continually.

"I ought not to keep them in my hands. They will fade.

Yet I cannot bear to put them away," she said. And then, after raising her eyes timidly, pleadingly, to his, she said, in a low voice:

"Take them from me. I can resign them to *you*."

The flowers were taken, the pretty little hand retained, and clasped warmly, and Bertram Roland's thoughts never returned to Ruth again that evening.

"Ah! here is the girl for me," said Bertram. "And, upon my word, I believe I might win her. I'm sure she is not wholly indifferent toward me now. Thank heaven, I have in no way committed myself to that little icicle. Either she has no heart to win, or *I* am not the man to find it."

Triumphantly Jem. held up the flowers next morning, and Katie Easton said:

"You would not have gotten them, Jem., had Ruth been home."

"Perhaps not. The future will and must prove that," Jem. said, with a saucy toss of her beautiful head.

Poor Ruth! Her vision of happiness was over. She wanted to get away from P——. She was almost sure the sun did not shine so brightly there, nor was the sky so blue as over her own home. Everything was gloomy. She would have run right away had her uncle not been so loving and kind. She did not want to seem ungrateful. Oh! what a trial it was for her, when Mr. Roland came, to sit and see his unmistakable admiration of Jem.

At length, every one grew to look upon him as Jem.'s lover. And Ruthey would steal away soon after his entrance, either to her own room to shed a few bitter tears, or to the sitting-room, to try and forget her love for a while, listening to uncle's merry jokes.

And Jem.—did she really love the man she had won from her cousin? Yes; as well as she was competent of loving anybody. Bertram Roland was a man of whose love she might be proud.

Bertram thought himself a very lucky and very happy man. He was almost sure Jem. loved him, and he had fully determined to propose and have their engagement proclaimed before the gayeties of the season should begin. He dreaded lest some one might discover his beautiful Jem. and contest the prize with him. Just at this point, perhaps, Bertram's good angel took charge of him; at any rate, his love-making was interrupted. A telegram, informing him of his mother's extreme illness, sent him flying from P—— as fast as steam and rails could carry him. During his absence of two weeks the gay season began. In the papers he saw the announcement of Miss Forrester's *debut*. He thought she might have waited his return, and wondered that she could enjoy those scenes during his absence.

Contrary to the expectation of physicians and friends, his mother's disease took a favorable turn. Soon after she was declared out of danger and convalescent. Then Bertram hastened back to his love.

The evening of his arrival he went immediately to Mr. Easton's, impatient to see his Jem. From the servant he learned the young ladies were all at a brilliant reception. Hurrying to his hotel, he changed his travelling suit and proceeded to the gay scene, the hostess being an old and valued friend. In the dressing-room Bertram met the brother of this lady, a college chum, who, after their toilets were completed, said:

"Now, come, Roland; I want to introduce you to the most beautiful girl in the house, although I scarcely think you'd be able to have the honor of a dance. I'm sure her card is made up. I'd venture a good deal that Delavan is down for every round dance."

"Ah, who may the lady be?" asked Bertram, a slight feeling of uneasiness in his heart.

"Miss Forrester, the most beautiful, sparkling gem you ever saw. Come; shall I introduce you?"

"By-and-bye, perhaps. But how is it with you? If I remember rightly, *you* were won't to worship at the shrine of beauty?"

"Yes, you are right. But with growing years and experience my ideas have changed somewhat. I worship now rather the jewel itself than the casket that contains it. I don't mind telling you, old fellow. There is a little woodland violet here; a little snow flake, more truly speaking, whose smile I'd sooner win. A cousin of the belle's. I tell you, Bert., I'm afraid of these charming, bewitching, bewildering women. They are just the thing we want for the ball-room, and just very apt to get a brother, lover, or husband, may be, into a quiet little game of pistols for two. No, no, give me a little girl, whose dear form is only clasped by one; whose hand never lingered in that of any man but the one to whom her love and her heart are pledged. Win the love of such a woman as little Ruth Morely, and you'll have it all to yourself. To the man who wins her love, this little icicle, as some call her, will melt, I know, and will make the truest, most loving wife. Ah, yes, she is the girl to take to a man's heart, and home. But, I fear there is no hope for me. Perhaps, her heart is won already."

"I've thought so myself," Roland answered quietly.

"Why, you know her?"

"I've met her several times. But come, it is growing late."

Before entering the dancing-saloon Roland stood hid behind the draperies of a window, and watched Jem.

She was in young Delavan's arms, borne through a waltz. She stood near enough for him to hear her quick breathing as she rested, with her hand still clasped in her partner's; to see her look at this acquaintance of a few days, as she had looked at him! Worse than all, to see her pick from her bouquet a flower which was pressed to young Delavan's lips, and then pinned near his heart.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, "my eyes are opened. This very night, if I had found her home, I should have offered her my heart and hand."

He would have left the scene immediately had not Kate Easton discovered him, and said:

"Do, come, help me find Ruth! I've been hunting a half hour for her."

Just then their hostess came up.

"You will find your cousin in my boudoir, Miss Easton. She was faint, and I carried her there. She is much better now."

Kate hurried off, with Bertram Roland, to find Ruth looking pale and very weary.

After considerable persuasion, she permitted Bertram to take her home. The little manœuvring, Kate declared, she knew was dreadfully selfish, but she did want to stay a little longer. And so, a second time, Ruth was supported by Bertram Roland's strong arm. He felt her trembling, and after the carriage had started, said gently:

"You must allow me to take care of you as I should my sister! You are still very weak and cold. I shall wrap you up better. There now—rest against me, little sister!"

She would say it. No matter what suffering it cost her, it would be so. She might as well get used to it.

"Cousin—" she murmured, scarce above a whisper.

"Never," he answered decidedly, repeating it, "Never! That is impossible!"

"Never!" came from Ruth's lips in a tone of mingled surprise and joy.

For the first time the thought entered Bertram Roland's mind that he had been mistaken. That, perhaps, this gentle, timid little girl did care for him. He was perfectly over his blind infatuation. His heart was already anxious to return to its true love. After a moment's hesitation, he said:

"I've not spoken to Miss Forrester this evening."

"You are hurt. You have heard about Mr. ——"

"No, I am not a bit hurt, little Ruth. I was rejoiced that Miss Forrester was nothing more to me than a pleasant acquaintance. I had been hurt before I met her—that I fail to win

from another some little show of regard. Why did you not keep me to yourself, Ruth? Had you no heart to give me?"

"I keep you? How could I?" Ruth answered, low.

"Oh, you little prude! I know you now. It is only word for word from you. Now tell me, have you any love to give one that loved you the very first hour you leaned upon him? Where is your heart, Ruth? I must find it, and keep it, too."

Then the little icicle melted, and dropping her head on his breast, she sobbed in joy, and whispered:

"Oh, you have had it all the time! And—and—you almost broke it when you were loving Jem."

"No, no; you must not use that word in connection with her. I long to see your eyes, my little Ruth, to find what I've looked for so often."

When they were home, and Ruth seated on the sofa, the shy eyes looked up, and Bertram found all he wanted there—love deep, pure and true.

The next morning Jem., having heard of Mr. Roland's arrival, made a very careful toilet, and awaited his coming. She expected a stormy scene with a jealous lover, ending with their engagement. She heard the door-bell ring. The servant brought up his card to Ruth.

To Jem.'s immense surprise, this happy little girl received it as a matter of course, and went into the parlor to see him. An hour after, when she came back, her cheeks were a little flushed, and in her eyes was a light that almost rivalled a brilliant gem that sparkled in a ring on her forefinger. Then the truth was plain, and Miss Forrester knew she had failed to win Ruth's lover. Don't blame her for saying a little spitefully:

"It was lucky for you, Ruth, that Mr. Delavan was in every way a man more to my mind than Mr. Roland."

Ruth was too happy to care for that, and only hoped that it might be so.

A LITTLE HERO.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"YOU are hard on him, Edward. If—"

"If—yes, *if* I did not endeavor to put some restraint on him, he would end his course either in the State prison or worse. If he had not a defender constantly in *you*, my course would be less difficult," said Edward Bryant, glancing angrily at the pale, gentle-looking woman beside him.

"Oh, Edward! how can you talk so? I do try to defend him only when I think you are unjust. If you would only be not quite so harsh, and sometimes say an encouraging word. Draw him closer to you. Let him talk to you as he does to me."

"Rebecca, do stop this nonsense. You may have time to listen to the boy's idle talk, and to talk back, as women generally do. But my mind is on matters of more importance. If you will not interfere, I can govern him. And I am determined that I will stop his going out every evening, or—well, he shall not return here if he does."

"Oh, Edward, indeed he does not go into any wicked company. He assures me he does not."

"And you believe him?"

"Yes, I do. I must."

"Well, I *know* he meets boys he would not dare to bring here. And I have heard they spend the evenings playing cards; and I doubt not, drinking too."

"Edward, Richard does not deny he has been with those

boys. But since the time you told him about it, and I pleaded so with him, he has never been there. He constantly assures me of this, and I have confidence in his words."

"Rebecca, I am not so foolish as to believe he is in a place where any good can be obtained. Why should he conceal it? I shall tell him to-night, if he is absent from home ever again after nine o'clock, I will not let him in—that I am determined upon," said Edward Bryant.

The poor mother knew it was of no avail to utter any word of remonstrance.

She busied herself about her house, finding extra work to keep her from moments of idleness, lest she should spend them in thinking and worrying over the burden so hard to bear.

School was out; she heard the boys coming along the pavement; soon after, Richard's footsteps. She knew the quick, light tread. The door opened; a bright, laughing face peeped in, the merry eyes glancing quick around the room, through the open door into the next, and then in he came.

"I'm glad you are home early. I want to talk to you before father comes," said his mother.

"And I want to talk to you too, mamma. What do you want to tell me?"

"Richie, my dear, father thinks very hard of your going out every evening after tea, and sometimes staying quite late. You will not do so any more, will you? that is, not for a while. Perhaps father will feel differently, and let you go sometimes. And another thing, you should ask his permission."

"Mother, if I did, you know he would snap out, 'No, sir!' and then when I went, which I should have to, I should be disobeying him. And so, you see, that would make it worse," Richie answered, his face losing its brightness, growing defiant and dark.

"When your father says 'No,' you must not disobey. Richie, promise me you will not go out to-night?"

"Don't ask me that, mother. I've promised to go. I came home to ask you to have supper early, so I could get off. Mother, indeed I am in no harm—"

"Richie, your father said to-day, if you were out again after nine o'clock, he would not let you come in. Oh, my boy, save me from such a blow as that! Promise, my darling?"

"Don't worry, mother. I must go, but I'll be back very early; trust me. I'm old enough to be treated differently by father. Just think, other boys of fifteen are not kept like I am. Father don't love me; and if it was not for you, I'd go away for good—"

"Hush. Your father does love you. It is because he is so anxious that you may do well, that he is perhaps a little strict. And now you know how much his mind is troubled over money matters. That makes him cross. You know he is trying to raise the mortgage from this house. Winter approaching, with so many extra expenses, makes it very hard. Don't think anything else than that your father loves you. Try to be brave, and do right, Richie."

A coming step arrested whatever more she would have said. A few moments after, Edward Bryant entered.

Richie took up a book and pretended to read. But his mother saw that the leaves were not often turned. Fearing his father might notice it also, she sent him on an errand, going out herself soon after to give some order for supper.

This meal was eaten in silence. Having finished eating, Richie got up, put back his chair, and was taking down his hat, when his father said, in a stern, cold voice:

"Your mother, I suppose, has informed you of my determination. Remember, sir, you will not be admitted after nine o'clock."

Richie looked at his mother and passed out.

"Trust me," his eyes said.

He came back early—before eight—that night and the

next; indeed for many nights, and sometimes he did not go out at all.

The mother's heart had almost ceased its trembling, when Richie came to her one evening, and whispered:

"Don't be frightened if I am a little later to-night. I'll make the time, but, may be, only by the last minute."

"Oh, be sure not a moment later. But why? You have been so good lately," pleaded the anxious mother.

"I'll tell you soon. Don't worry," he whispered, and was gone.

How swiftly the moments flew after half-past eight! She was about saying, "Surely that clock is fast," when the thought that by thus speaking she might remind Edward of what possibly he might not be thinking of, checked her.

Five minutes of nine. Her heart was sinking, when—oh, joy!—flying steps come down the pavement, and he is home in time.

Several nights passed in the same dreadful way; and then nine o'clock came, and a quarter ticked rapidly by. Then, to her waiting, terrified heart, the moments became longer, the next quarter more than doubling the other, it seemed, and so on until ten was just striking, when she heard him coming. Terribly excited, she sprang up to admit him, when her husband put forth his hand, drew her down, and said:

"You must not. I will speak to him."

In vain she pleaded, beseeched, and prayed. And to the boy's entreaty, "Let me in, father, and I will explain all about it," he was deaf.

'Tis needless to recount her tearful words, as she tried to touch the iron heart, by drawing his mind back to the days of Richie's infancy, when he was so innocent and full of love: "Loving father better than even mother," she said; of their plans in those days for his future; of temptations so difficult

for youths to resist; lastly, she shivered, and spoke of the cold night, and his having no clothing to protect him—all, all in vain.

"No fear of his suffering; let him return to his friends, where he has been all the evening," was the only answer he made her.

Pressing her lips close to the door, she cried:

"My boy, I can only pray for you. Oh, Richie, think of mother, praying for you, and keep from evil."

"Don't worry. I'll fix it all right," she heard him whisper. And then he moved away. His steps grew fainter; and when she heard them no more, she went with trembling feet up to her room, and sank on the floor. In the anguish of the moment she cried:

"Oh, God, *why* are children given to those who thus trifle with so sacred a trust?"

She knew Richie would be too proud to ask a shelter of any friend, under the circumstances. Where would he go? "Oh, God, shield him from evil!" She prayed on and on, oft-repeating this cry.

Richie had no definite plan for the night. He started and walked away, not knowing where. Temptation lurks everywhere. He had just turned the corner when a voice called out:

"Dick!"

Turning, he saw one of his former companions, a youth three or four years older than Richie, and one of those his father had spoken of.

Cold, hungry, and tired—worse still, his young heart filled with indignation—Richie was reckless, or he would never have answered the youth's inquiry:

"What's up?" with "Father has locked me out, and I don't much care where I fetch up."

"Oh, you'll get used to it in time. Come on; take a night with me."

A shout of welcome greeted their entrance into a place comfortable enough to induce Richie to tarry: plenty to eat, and too much to drink.

"Come on! Take a bite, Dick, and then we'll have some fun. Haven't forgot how to shuffle the cards, old boy, hey?"

"What is the matter with him? He is ill!" cried some one; and his companion, turning, caught him as he was falling from his seat.

"It is this hot room; it is as hot as ——. Let us get him into the air."

The hot room and the fumes of liquor had been too much for Richie, in his exhausted state. They placed him on a cushion out in the passage.

"I'll be all right in a little while," he said.

The cool air revived him. His brain cleared. His heart grew strong and right.

"Richie, mother is praying for you," seemed whispered again in his ear.

He got up quickly, and went out again into the street.

The poor miserable mother rested on no pillow that night. Sitting beside the window, she strained her ear to every sound. Near day she fell asleep for a few moments.

Edward Bryant had slept but little either. He was not perfectly well satisfied with his night's work. Going into the kitchen, he unlocked the door, turned the knob, and was about pulling it open, when it flew back, and Richie fell in.

I think the stern nature of his father was softened as he saw the boy rise up, shiver, and sink into the nearest seat.

Not waiting for the servant, Edward Bryant hastened to kindle the fire. As soon as it was burning well, he said:

"You had better come near the fire," in a kind tone.

Richie obeyed mechanically, again sinking wearily into the chair.

The mother's keen ear must have caught the sounds from below, for in a very few moments she was beside her boy.

Putting her arm around him, she found his clothes quite wet. Looking out, she saw it had rained during the night.

Hurrying away, she returned with dry clothes, and assisted him in putting them on.

Every movement of Richie's told that he was suffering, yet he made no complaint.

He eat very little if any breakfast, but drank a cup of hot coffee; after which he seemed much better, and started to school.

His father was just stepping out of the door, a half hour after, when a carriage drove up. The driver, a friend, jumped out, saying:

"I found Richard on his way to school, and have brought him back to you. He is really ill. You had better get him to bed, and send for your physician."

Yes, Richie was ill. Days passed, and the encouraging smile faded from the good doctor's face. He shook his head gravely in answer to the parents' oft-repeated inquiry, "Will he live?" Oh, the anguish that filled the father's heart! If Richie was spared, how differently he would act toward him in the future, he thought. If he only could call back that dreadful night! Bowed though he was with the weight of sorrow and remorse, Edward Bryant had yet to drink of a bitterer cup.

The day they hovered around their boy's bed, watching the sleep, the awaking from which would be to life or death, a visitor came. The miserable father went down to meet "a friend of Richie's," as he announced himself. In answer to his inquiries, Mr. Bryant told the little hope he had.

"Well, well, poor boy! Good boy," the gentleman said; "I have been keeping a secret for him. But perhaps he may never be able to tell it himself, and you ought to know before—" Here he hesitated. "Well, I am sorry he could not have the pleasure himself. Here, sir, is Richard's money—seventy-five dollars. He has been working with me for four months past, at night. I suppose you know he is a pretty good hand at printing?"

Richie's father could only shake his head and groan.

"Yes, he has been, with my boys, learning for a year past. But, you see, he wanted to give you a pleasant surprise, and a lift with the winter's expenses, he said; and so here it is. I was afraid he was going to be sick that last night. You have a boy to be proud of. He is the true steel. God grant he may be spared you."

"Should he die, I have killed him!" groaned forth the miserable man.

And in his anguish he told of all his unjust suspicions, and his cruel treatment that terrible night.

"I'm sorry, friend Bryant, to add one drop to your cup of bitterness; but I can't help saying you've been on the wrong path with that boy. And if he had been what you believed, driving a boy from home, and shutting the door against him, is not the way to keep him from evil. Poor boy! Good boy!"

"And I have killed him!" groaned the father.

But Richie did not die. Edward Bryant every day of his life thanks God he was spared that dreadful blow. Richie never had cause after to doubt his father's love, or the father to doubt his son's worthiness; there is perfect confidence between them. And the mother's heart has ceased its trembling, knowing the father's love is united as truly with hers as when, in Richie's infancy, they watched together beside his cradle.

AN ANGEL'S GIFTS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

WITH a tired look on her care-worn face, a little woman turned from a large ironing table, hung on the clothes-horse a garment ruffled, puffed and tucked, and lifting from the cradle her restless babe, sank with it into a rocker, saying:

"Now, baby, mamma will attend to you. Your patience has been sadly tried, but mamma must work for baby and baby's little brothers. Poor little dear! You are looking pale and thin since the cold days have come, and you cannot sit out in the sunshine. I wish you had some warm clothes—a hood and cloak—that I might send you out. My baby is badly off, isn't she? Oh, and how many babies there are with more clothes than they can ever use!—garments costly and fine! One yard of the trimming of some would make my darling so warm and nice; yes, pay for a complete outfit—hood, cloak and shoes! Baby should have had those things before now, but little brothers had to go out in the cold to school, and so they must be made comfortable first. Now my pet must go back to the cradle."

She laid the little one down, kissed and patted her, and returned to her work.

A little while, and baby grew restless again. She drew the cradle closer, and with one foot on the rocker, she worked on, talking in soft, soothing tones, and making promises to baby of better times.

"Indeed, I will neglect my darling no longer. To-night I'll send these clothes home, and in the morning I'll go out and buy a warm, soft hood. And—no, I cannot do more this week: the other things must come one at a time. Then I'll stop by, and borrow Mrs. Brown's carriage, and take my baby out to ride. Indeed I will."

Baby had grown pleasant; and although understanding nothing of the promises being made, she knew mamma was coaxing and saying sweet things to her, and so laughed and cooed in return. Stopping suddenly, she looked, as babies often do, so knowing and earnest, that her mother broke into a merry little laugh, saying:

"Oh, you *are* the smartest, brightest, funniest little babe that ever was! I almost think you understand me sometimes. Now I believe you want to ask what you will do for something like a cloak. Mamma's shawl will have to do. It is not so *very* large, and is soft and nice. And mamma will have to wear the little brown sacque. It is hard times, baby; papa's sickness put us back so much. But never mind. The winter won't last long. The cold, gloomy days will pass by, and the sunshiny ones come to baby again."

* * * * * * * *

In an elegant boudoir, standing before a beautiful little bureau, was a pale woman, clothed in the deepest mourning robes. Her face was very sad, and when she opened one of the drawers, and took from it one after another of little snowy garments, they were sprinkled with her tears. Robes of costly lace and embroidery, flannels soft and fine, beautiful little sacques and aprons—all she took out and placed them on a table near by. Then a little box came forth. She removed the top, looked in a moment, and then drew out the baby's bonnet. All the other articles were dear and sacred to the mother, but this little thing of lace and ribbon more than all the rest. It *looked* like baby. Holding it up before her, and

wiping away the tears that dimmed her eyes, she could almost see the lovely little face peeping from out the silken ruches—the ruches that had rested against her darling's dimpled cheek; the strings rumpled and slightly soiled, which she had tied under the little chin; at the same time covering with kisses the cherry lips, and thinking, was there another baby in the world as sweet and pretty as her little Rose? She kissed again and again the ruches, the strings, and then put back the little bonnet, and sank kneeling beside her baby's crib, pressing her face to the pillow, where little Rose's had rested, and wept bitterly.

Her affliction was very severe. Her husband was first taken, and, a few months after, her little Rose—her only one—the angels bore away.

"Husbandless, childless! Oh, why could not my babe have been spared me?" she moaned.

The door opened and closed gently. The bereaved woman arose, and stood again beside the table on which she had placed the baby's clothes.

"Put them away, Ellen, carefully away. I could not bear other hands than yours to touch them. You loved her scarcely less than I. Everything that was hers is sacred now, Ellen. Get every article, everything that she has played with, and put them away."

"Mrs. Clifton—" She had an appealing look in her sad eyes.

"What is it, Ellen?"

"Do you mean that I must put away our darling's clothes? hide them from sight? Are little Rose's beautiful robes to be worn only by time?" Ellen asked, looking beseechingly into Rose's mother's eyes.

"Ellen, what *can* you mean? Can it be possible you would wish to see those sacred little garments worn by any other babe?"

"I would have the little angel's clothes making comfortable some little babe who may be suffering for warm and soft garments."

"Ellen, I cannot—oh! I cannot think of a strange child wearing my darling's things. Why do you speak of it?"

"I will tell you. Let me bring your chair. It will tire you to stand so long.

"Once I felt as you—as only a mother can feel. I never have told you that I too was a widow, and childless. It was not necessary I should. When I came to nurse your little one, mine had been in heaven a year. Carefully I collected every article of clothing belonging to her, everything that I thought her little hands had played with, and put all away. And then at times I would go and take them out, and weep over them. There was another little girl living near me, just about my darling's age. She had few clothes, and those not nice and warm. I knew this, but I could not give her *my* baby's clothes. No, never should another wear them, I said. And so I continued to feel until one night, I dreamed I was in the most beautiful garden I ever saw, imagined, or read of. The grass was greener, the flowers brighter. Birds were singing, streams of water rippling along, on whose bosom floated swans. Music and perfume filled the air. And then I heard sounds that attracted me more than all the beauty, all other music—the sound of children's voices. I wandered in search of them. Oh, I cannot describe to you that lovely scene. Numberless little children were playing around, so bright and happy. I have never seen children so happy here; never heard their laughs so merry; never seen their smiles so bright. I looked about to find *my* babe, but she was not with those little ones. Then I remembered she could not walk alone when she left me, and so of course could not be out at play. Looking about for her, I came to a house—nay, not a house, a temple of light it was; built of the most beautiful stone—

alabaster, it seemed. The doors were golden; the windows of crystals, clear and bright; fountains played in front, amidst the trees and flowers; everything was dazzling in magnificence and beauty. While I still gazed, from the temple came a woman, with a face more lovely than any earthly face can be. In her arms she bore a babe, *my* babe. I tried to spring forward to clasp my own, but I could not move. I could only see, not touch her; I was not worthy then. How beautiful she was! She knew me, smiled, and threw kisses to me; but offered not to come. She was dressed in a robe finer than anything I had ever seen, all white and shining. The beautiful woman who held my darling beckoned me to follow her. I did. She went before, up on a high hill, and pointed for me to look. I saw below a place very familiar—our earth. There were children there, but not bright like those I had just seen. Many were miserably clad, and some seemed shivering with cold.

"'Look!' said the woman who held my babe. 'Look at those little ones suffering! See *yours*, how lovingly cared for!'

"And then my little Lilly said, in lisping, baby tones:

"'Poor babies! Mamma, give poor babies Lilly's warm clothes! Go, mamma, quick! Make poor babies warm; and then come back, and Lilly will go to sleep again in mamma's arms.'

"I sprang forward, determined to get one kiss from her sweet lips, and woke up."

"Oh, Ellen! what a strange dream!" Mrs. Clifton said, her face deeply thoughtful.

"To me it was more than strange. It was a warning. I felt as if my babe had really been near me. Her sweet voice still was sounding in my ear.

"The next day I unlocked my trunk, took out my darling's clothes, and gave them all, save one or two pieces of little worth to others, but everything to me, and gave them to my

neighbor's babe. How thankful she was! I told her that Lilly sent them to her child. I felt so. And how delighted the little thing was with her pretty new clothes! And I was happier than I had been since Lilly went with the angels. Now I have told you why I spoke as I did of little Rose's clothes.

"Where do you wish me to put them?"

"Put them, Ellen, on some needy little babe: all save the bonnet and the little suit she last had on. Those I must keep. Do you know of any one in particular you would like to give them to?"

"Oh, yes. You remember William Martin, who did some brick-work for you last spring? He has been very ill for many weeks, but is to work again now. His long sickness has of course been very expensive, and thrown them behind a great deal. His wife has been taking some ladies' washing to help pay the expenses. She has a baby near a year old. The little one, I know, has but few clothes, and nothing warm and nice. Shall I give them to her?"

"Oh, yes, Ellen, give them to her. I know my darling would do it, were she here. And, Ellen, you may tell John to take Rose's carriage, too. Tell Mrs. Martin to use it until her babe is too large to need it, and then send it back to me, and we will find another babe to put in it. We will keep that to loan around to the feeble little ones."

"Oh, how happy you will make both mother and babe!" Ellen said, hurrying on to do Mrs. Clifton's bidding.

Little Mrs. Martin was just starting from her home, the next morning, to fulfil her promise to baby, when, just at the door, she met her friend Ellen, laden with bundles, and John with a beautiful carriage.

Ellen went in, untied her packages, and displayed to the wondering mother the abundant supply of beautiful and comfortable little garments.

"These are for your little one to wear, and the carriage is loaned her as long as she may want it," said Ellen.

"Oh, surely these are fairy gifts, baby!" exclaimed the delighted mother.

"Nay, not fairy's, but angel's gifts," Ellen answered. Then she told from whence they came.

"Oh, baby, the sunshiny days have come soon, haven't they? Yesterday we thought it was so dark and cold; but to-day, baby, is very bright to us," continued the happy little woman, trying first one and then another little garment on her babe.

Mrs. Clifton, in throwing a ray of sunshine on the poor woman's dreary path, has dispelled much of the gloom from her own.

She is calmer, more cheerful, now that little angel Rose's clothes will be worn out by a needy babe, and not alone by Time.

MISS DE CRESPIGNEY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"NOW, mother, tell me why it is you are so anxious to have me find Mrs. Morris, when I reach New York?"

"I have intended to do so, Stanley, but have delayed as long as possible, referring to the saddest days of my life. To-morrow you leave me, and I wish to have you feel the deep debt of gratitude we owe the woman who was our only friend when we were in sore need, strangers in a strange land. You know, my son, of your father's dying when you were scarcely two years old. He left us a year previous, in our English home, and sought employment in New York. He was very successful, and ten months after he wrote me full of hope and bright anticipation. He bade me come to him, and enclosed money for our passage and the necessary outfit for our journey. How happy I was with thoughts of our reunion! I was an orphan. My home was with a relative, who, though always kind, could not hide from me the fact that we were an additional burden. So, of course, I was doubly anxious to get to your father. On the vessel, coming over, was Mrs. Morris. She was in deep grief; returning, a widow, to the home she had left a happy wife, scarcely two years before. Her husband had long been an invalid. His physicians advised a sea voyage, speaking confidently of the favorable result. But it proved of very little, if any, benefit. He died in London, a few weeks previous to my meeting her.

"On our arrival in New York, we learned before leaving the vessel that the cholera was making fearful progress there. After looking anxiously for your father's coming in vain, Mrs. Morris proposed I should share the carriage waiting, with friends, for her, and go to my husband's boarding-house, the address of which I had. A terrible dread filled my heart. He must be ill, I felt sure, or he would have met us. We reached our destination. Resisting Mrs. Morris' efforts to detain me while the driver went to inquire, I sprang from the carriage, rang the door bell, and asked for Mr. Newton. I distinctly remember the look of deep sympathy from the Irish girl who answered the bell, and quickly ran back, to return with the lady of the house. She drew me into the sitting-room, and strove to break gently the terrible tidings. I heard her tell that your father had fallen a victim to the dreadful scourge. They had buried him only the day before. Nothing more I knew until, several hours after, I woke to consciousness in Mrs. Morris' home. Tenderly she cared for you during my sickness which followed the fearful shock, gently soothing me all the time with promises of her continual friendship. The little money left after defraying your father's expenses was insufficient to take us back to England, and if otherwise, I should have hesitated to return again to burden my uncle.

"'You must stay with me. Share my home as a sister as long as you choose, or until your little man here provides for you a better one,' said this kind friend that God had raised up for me in my great trouble.

"She was holding you in her arms then, caressing you. She continued to cheer me with her kind, loving assurances.

"I remained with her several months, until I grew well and strong. Then I insisted that she should help me to obtain some employment. I could not consent longer to remain dependent. It was imposing on her hospitality. I felt my services were but small remuneration for all she gave me.

"Yielding to my entreaties she obtained for me the position of nursery governess for Mr. Manners' children. With them I remained during the day, returning to you at night. How lovingly she cared for you in my absence! As faithfully as if her own, through the many diseases of childhood, she nursed you.

"When I had been thus daily separated from you for eighteen months, my patrons proposed I should bring you, and remain with them all the time. Dear, good Mrs. Morris really grieved to part with you. She had no children, and I believe would gladly have kept you always. We lived very happily in our new home for nearly five years. There of course it was I met Dr. Manners, who came from his western home to visit his brother. When he returned, you and I went with him. You know that through his loving care you have never felt the loss of your father. Until the last five years I corresponded regularly with my friend. What can have prevented my hearing from her during this long time I cannot tell, unless the letter I wrote, telling her of my removal from Iowa to this State, never reached her, and she may have written there to me. Sometimes I fear she may be dead, or in very destitute circumstances. Her means were very limited when we were with her. Quite likely, in the great goodness of her heart, she has continued her charities until she has impoverished herself. Now, my boy, you know why I am so anxious you should find her, and in every possible way seek to prove our gratitude."

"Indeed, mother, I will. But surely God will not let so noble a woman suffer. I will find her if she is living, and she shall have a son who, if she needs, will make a home for her. Mother, my heart is filled now with love for her who was my other mother."

"That's right, my son. I would have you feel so," said Mrs. Manners. "Now here come your sisters to tell their

wishes. You will have enough to keep you very busy. Take out your tablets, to make note of what you could never remember otherwise, I'm sure."

"All right, mother. But your wish is marked on the tablets of my heart," Stanley Newton answered.

A few days after he arrived in New York. Presenting his letter of introduction, he was cordially received by several of the most respectable and influential families of the city. But Stanley had little time for social intercourse. He immediately began his studies in the office of a celebrated lawyer. Every hour that he could spare from duty he devoted to the earnest determination of finding his mother's friend.

Through the liberality of his step-father, Dr. Manners, Stanley had sufficient money to permit his indulging in amusements, but he would not. Every dollar was reserved for the one sacred purpose—to relieve Mrs. Morris, if he found her in poverty.

One evening he yielded to the earnest entreaty of a young friend to accept an invitation to the opera.

"I will take no excuse; you must go. You have made such a recluse of yourself. But I am determined to draw you out to-night. I have secured a fine position for you to command a view not only of the stage, but also of the audience. I want you to see our beautiful girls," said his friend.

Never was there a more brilliant assemblage. It was one of Rossini's best operas, which should certainly have enchained Stanley's entire attention; but to his friend's perfect amazement, in answer to his admiring exclamation, "Beautiful! exquisite! sublime!" Stanley replied:

"Indeed she is. Who is she? Is that her father attending her?"

His eyes were fixed on a private box close by.

"Who are you talking about, man?" asked his friend, in a low tone.

"Why, I thought you were speaking of that young lady in the opposite box. Excuse me, Frank; I had really forgotten all about the performance," said Stanley.

"Well, I declare! You are a nice fellow to bring to hear an opera. Don't look there so much. I'll tell you all about them when we get out."

Stanley tried very hard to keep his eyes on the stage, but they would wander to the most beautiful girl he had ever seen —one so different from the many there. All others were so much dressed; feathers, flowers, jewels and ribbons everywhere, except with that lovely girl, whose head was adorned only by its own wealth of bright brown hair, which was drawn back from her fair face, and fell in a heavy cluster, wavy and curling, to her waist.

Stanley could not keep his eyes away from the beautiful girl until he felt sure his constant gazing had attracted the notice of another young lady who was seated next to her. Stanley saw her speak, and then, looking toward him, seemed to be directing the attention of her companion. But instead of turning toward him, the lovely girl drew farther back in the shade, and Stanley allowed his eyes to wander no longer. He felt that she was displeased, and perhaps considered him very rude.

"Oh, if she only knew how impossible it was for me to keep my eyes away, she would pity me," he thought.

"It was a clear case of love at first sight," his friend declared, when they were on their way home, and Stanley asked:

"Who is she? Do tell me, Frank!"

"She is one of the greatest heiresses of our city—Miss De Crespigney. Ah, I see, Stanley. You have gone the way of all the rest. Well, try your luck. You are as fine-looking a fellow as I know, and can easily obtain an introduction. You may be the fortunate one."

"Do you mean to say none of her numerous admirers have found favor with her? That she is not engaged?"

"Yes, I mean not engaged, nor likely to be, it seems. She treats all alike kindly, gently dismissing them as lovers, yet retaining their friendship. She has passed two seasons thus."

"And that grand-looking old gentleman with her, who is he?" asked Stanley.

"Her father—a courteous, genial man. You need not fear him," answered Frank.

Stanley returned home, to sleep and dream of the beautiful girl. Indeed she was constantly in his thoughts, and he deeply, hopelessly in love.

A few days after, when sitting in the park, he heard the clattering of approaching horses' hoofs. Looking up, he beheld, dashing wildly forward, a terrified animal, bearing a beautiful girl, whom Stanley immediately recognized as Miss De Crespigney. Springing forward, he caught the reins, and succeeded in arresting its mad course; and lifting from the saddle the almost senseless girl, bore her to a seat. Immediately after, her father rode up, his face blanched with terror.

Stanley, seeing his alarm, said quickly:

"Your daughter is unharmed, sir."

"Thank this gentleman, papa," the beautiful girl said.

The old gentleman caught Stanley's hand, saying:

"I scarcely know how to express my gratitude, sir. But for your timely aid, I might have been childless."

What Stanley replied, he never remembered himself. But it made a very favorable impression on Mr. De Crespigney, for on parting with him he gave him his card, and urged a speedy call.

A sweet, grateful smile Eva gave him, which might have filled Stanley's heart with great hope; but he would not accept it so. Such happiness was not for him. He could not seek her love, even if it were possible he might win it.

When relating the incident of the afternoon to his friend, Frank exclaimed:

"Why, old fellow, you are in luck. Fate or fortune, whichever you may call it, has given you a great lift. Accept Mr. De Crespigney's invitation; and I'll be willing to wager all my earthly goods you will ask me to stand groomsman before I am very many years or months older. Go ahead, Stanley!"

"I dare not—I cannot. Although never aspiring to such joy as you speak of, still it would be great pleasure to know that lovely girl; but even that I cannot grant myself."

"Why not? What is to prevent?" asked Frank.

"Duty—a sacred duty I have to perform. If I went to visit Miss De Crespigney, I should have to dress more, and in many little elegances of the toilet spend money which I have devoted to another object. I will tell you."

And Stanley proceeded to tell in few words his mother's story. At the conclusion of which, Frank exclaimed:

"Well, we *must* find Mrs. Morris; I'll help you. And now to work. What have you done?"

Stanley told of his continual inquiries, and endeavors to find some clue from the old residents in the neighborhood.

"Oh, nonsense, boy! I'll have her before the week is out."

Sitting down to the desk he wrote:

"If Mrs. Alba Morris, who came from England in the steamer *Magnolia*, July, 1851, will call at No. 55 —— street, she will hear something to her advantage."

"There, if living, this will bring her," he said, handing the paper to Stanley.

"I wonder I never thought of this. We will go now to the newspaper office," said Stanley.

Three days after, the friends were seated in the office when a lady entered.

They had just been talking of Mrs. Morris. And when Stanley's eyes rested on the face of the sweet, motherly-looking woman, he hastened forward, and said eagerly:

"*You* are Mrs. Morris, I am sure. O yes, my heart claims you, my other mother!"

"Yes, yes; and you are my boy, Stanley Newton, the only son I ever knew."

The good woman's eyes filled with tears, as Stanley, clasping her hand in his, drew her to a seat on the sofa, and sank beside her, exclaiming:

"Thank Heaven I have found you!"

Frank withdrew then, and there followed mutual explanations concerning the long silence between the friends. Letters had miscarried both ways.

"My circumstances have changed very much since then," said Mrs. Morris.

"Yes, mother feared as much. You were ever so very kind. But God is too good to let you be needy long. Now your boy has found you, things will be different. Nothing I can do can repay you for all you gave to us. But all I have, all I gain in the future, is to comfort you."

"My good, noble boy!" Mrs. Morris said, putting her arms round him and pressing her lips to his. "You will come to see me this evening, and we will have a long talk?"

"Yes, indeed I will. And you will speak plainly to me, as to your own son?"

"Yes, Stanley; here is the address. I will look for you," she said, handing him a card, and bidding him good-bye.

Frank soon after returned, and asked quickly:

"Well, is it as you feared?"

"O yes. I am to go to see her to-night. There is her address."

"I thought so, by her very plain attire. But what is this? No. ——, Fifth Avenue! Ah, yes. She is a housekeeper, I suppose," said Frank.

"*That* shall not last long though," Stanley returned.

Frank looked again at the card, and catching it up, held it before Stanley, exclaiming:

"Look at this again. I declare, Stanley, fate has determined to throw you constantly in Miss De Crespigney's way. Your friend is living there. You might as well yield to the good fortune which I am sure is waiting for you, not be fighting against it."

"I am very sorry she is there."

"Well, you need not worry. Be sure if you call *only* to see the *housekeeper*, she will receive you in the housekeeper's room."

"That is well. I shall not presume on Mr. De Crespigney's kindness."

Stanley, choosing an hour when he thought Mrs. Morris' duties would not claim her, presented himself at Mr. De Crespigney's mansion.

Ringing the bell, which was immediately answered by a servant, Stanley inquired for Mrs. Morris. He was about handing his card, when his friend came into the hall, cordially welcoming him. Still holding his hand, she drew him into the magnificent drawing-room, and up to Mr. De Crespigney, saying:

"My husband—" but before she could proceed with the introduction the old gentleman exclaimed:

"Why, bless my heart, this is *my* young friend! I've been waiting and wishing him to call for two days, never dreaming *your* friend, whom you have been talking so much about, was the same fellow. Welcome, welcome, my boy! If you are my wife's boy, you are certainly mine too."

Stanley's surprise may be imagined; and his face flushed with mortification when he remembered his words to her whom he thought was still Mrs. Morris, poor and needy.

Mr. De Crespigney went out to summon his daughter, and Stanley began an apology for his great mistake.

"Dear boy, if you knew how much real joy your kind, loving words gave me, you would not attempt an apology. You have proved your noble nature. But here comes Eva."

Sweetly the beautiful girl greeted him, and never in his life had Stanley spent so happy an evening.

"How now, Stanley? Shall you yield to Fate and your heart's pleadings?" Frank said, after Stanley had told him of the denouement.

"I shall yield to my heart's pleading. What my *fate* may be I fear to think," answered Stanley.

A few months after, Stanley sought her who always called him "son," and, opening his heart for her knowledge and guidance, said:

"I love her! I love her! What shall I do? I have struggled against it. Dare I hope? Oh, speak and direct me!"

"Take hope, my son. Go to her father. He is noble, kind and just. You need have no fears," said his friend.

"Eva, sweet Eva, your father has given me permission to tell you, what you surely must have long since divined, how deeply and truly I love you. May I say all my heart is eager to tell?"

A beautiful, encouraging smile bade him speak that which the lovely girl was happy to know.

The next morning Frank exclaimed, as Stanley entered the office:

"What has come over you, man? You look as if you had just arrived from the land of perfect bliss."

"Or have just entered there," answered Stanley. "Frank, your prediction has come true. Thank Heaven, Eva De Crespigney will be mine!"

And so ended all Stanley's plans of sacrifice, the intention of which had secured for him such a blessed reward.

AN OLD TRAMP.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WELL?"

"Well," returned Farmer Ellsworth, looking quizzically at his wife, and holding before her an open letter.

"Oh, husband, don't keep me in suspense. How tantalizing you are! Besides, I have no time to be idling—especially if he is coming."

"Didn't I tell you 'well?' If he was not going to accept the invitation, I guess you wouldn't have thought it *well* at all, hey?"

"But is he coming *here*, to *us*? *Do* talk like a man, John Ellsworth; or let me read the letter," Mrs. John said, in a voice not particularly amiable.

"He's coming here—will arrive Saturday afternoon," answered Mr. Ellsworth briefly, evidently not pleased by his wife's tone and words.

She, so delighted with the news he gave her, immediately was restored to more than her usual good-humor, and soon won him to an equally amiable state of mind.

"Dear me! I *wish* the girls would come. I say, husband, can't you give Amanda Melvina twenty dollars and let her go down to P—— in the early train? You know she wants a shawl, and some trimming for her hat. And, now I think of it, my dress cap is dreadfully old-fashioned. Not that I care so much for myself; but when one has grown sons or daughters, they ought to appear to the best advantage possible.

You will give her the money, and let her go, won't you?" coaxed Mrs. Ellsworth.

"Can't you get all you want in the village?"

"No, indeed. I've got to send to the town anyhow for Mocha coffee, and some French mustard. Let me see—what else?"

"Stop, wife, while I say a word. Don't you know Brother Devine lives in town? He is used to all that sort of truck. Now, if you want to please him, just give him our regular country fare."

"Country fare!" exclaimed Mrs. Ellsworth, in a tone of mingled contempt and reproach—"country fare to the most celebrated minister in the State! I declare, John Ellsworth, if your wife hadn't a little common-sense, I don't know what would become of your children. I have always an eye to their future welfare."

Mrs. Ellsworth was marching off to the kitchen to have a consultation with her cook, when her husband called her:

"Well, wife, have it as you choose about that. Now about the girls. How much did you say?"

"Twenty dollars will get all we care to have—"

"And Millie; don't she want something too?" asked Mr. Ellsworth, in a hesitating tone.

"Millie! No. She will do very well with what she has. Amanda Melvina can let her have a ribbon or so, if necessary. She will not go to church Sunday. Some one will have to stay home to superintend dinner; and she don't expect to go."

"Wife, she is my sister's child, and I don't like to see so much difference made between the girls."

"Nonsense. Millie is young, and must expect to keep in the background until Amanda Melvina is married. Then we can fix her up rather more. But here they come now."

In a few moments the girls came in: a tall, dashing-looking one, very like her mother must have been twenty years before; and a pale, gentle little maid, that the name of Millie suited so well.

"What is the news, ma?" asked Amanda Melvina in a loud voice, not remarkable for anything but its strength.

"Good news, I know, from aunt's pleasant expression. I see the satisfaction creeping out everywhere," returned Millie, whose voice was in good keeping with her name and nature.

"Yes, good news it is. The Reverend Mr. Devine has accepted the invitation to preach next Sabbath, and is coming here," said Mrs. Ellsworth.

"Oh, I am so glad! La! ma, how mad Mrs. Capers will be, when she hears it! She expects to entertain all the ministers—that is, those of much account."

"Yes; and since her husband was elected to Congress, she thinks *she* is the greatest lady in the village. Dear, dear, if your father had taken *my* advice, he might have been in Richard Capers' place, and *we* might have talked of going to Washington next winter. Mrs. Capers can't talk to anybody ten minutes without lugging *that* in; not that *I* care, or think it could add anything to *our* respectability. But we have no time to waste. Up and be doing, girls. Millie, get out the silver—*all* of it!—the whole service. I have not used it since the last christening, and thought I shouldn't until there was a wedding. Never mind; may be this will be a step toward that. Amanda Melvina, *you* are to go to town to-morrow morning by early train, to get some fixings. Dear me! I can't help thinking how Mrs. Capers will look when she sees us come into the church with Brother Devine."

"Look here, wife; if any stranger heard you talk so much about Mrs. Capers they would say you were jealous of her. Now *do* stop it. Richard Capers is a good friend of mine, and if a man does have a wife that is a little vain, or weak, or foolish—I don't know which she is—*he* can't help it, *I* know that well enough," said Mr. Ellsworth.

I don't know that he intended to be personal, but, poor man! he was glad to rush out of the house to escape the tempest he had raised, his worthy wife taking his remark all to herself.

Such a rubbing, scrubbing and polishing as was going on at Rosedale! every one busy enough; little Millie Dale most of any. As Millie was never called to the piano, it did not matter if *her* hands were red and swollen; so she cleaned the silver, washed and ironed the handsomest table-cloths and napkins, fluted the ruffles on the bed linen, and helped at the baking; while Amanda Melvina newly arranged and decorated the parlor and spare bedrooms, wiped the china and glass, and practised some sacred pieces to sing Sabbath evening.

Millie Dale was the orphan child of Mr. Ellsworth's only sister—a gentle, loving girl, whose heart often longed for sympathy and affection. Her uncle really loved her—scarcely less than his own daughter; but for prudential reasons he did not manifest the love he felt. Millie had a comfortable home, plenty to eat, and an ample supply of good clothes. This ought to satisfy any one, Mrs. Ellsworth thought, and felt she was doing her whole duty toward her husband's niece; but oh, perhaps if she could have looked into the orphan's heart, and seen how it hungered for just such a loving look as rested on her cousin so many times a day, thirsted for a word of tenderness, a caress, aye, even a hand to fall gently, fondly on her head or shoulder, she might have spared a morsel of that lavished on her own, to the motherless one.

They were up earlier than usual next morning, that Amanda might get off in the early train. This young lady, the pride of her mother's heart, understood perfectly that out of the funds she had in her porte-monnaie—twenty dollars from her father, and as much more from her mother—she was to purchase just what she wanted to make herself appear as charming

as possible; for what, leaked out at the breakfast table when Mrs. Ellsworth asked:

"Amanda Melvina, my love, did you not meet a son of Brother Devine's last summer on that excursion?"

"Yes, mamma, *the* son; he has but one. He seemed a very pleasant young gentleman. *I* had but a poor chance of judging though. Millie can tell more about him. She managed to keep him near her the most of the time," returned Amanda, the concluding part of her remark not in a very pleasant manner.

"*Managed*, cousin?" Millie said, in a low tone, looking reproachfully at Amanda.

Mrs. Ellsworth's brow contracted, but cleared a few moments after, when she determined to keep Millie out of sight during Mr. Devine's stay.

Saturday noon everything was in readiness for the distinguished guest. Amanda had returned the day before, delighted with her purchases, and giving perfect satisfaction to her mother.

"Now I *do* hope we shall have no other company. But, land's sake! it will be the first time, if we don't. People think they are privileged to stop here: some of your father's relatives from down East, may be, or an old tramp wanting a night's rest with us—some one we will be ashamed of, I know; I *feel* it in my very bones. And it all comes of your father opening his doors wide, taking everybody in. I declare I *won't* stand it. Millie, look here. You are always flying around the garden. If you see any one coming, you must tell them we can't accommodate them just now. Or—there, you need not make such a wry face, I will send Norah to tell them. Oh, I forgot you are going to the village on that errand. Now mind; don't you bring anybody off the noon train home with you."

Millie went off with a troubled face, dreading lest she should

have to hurt somebody's feelings, to please her aunt. She resolved to stay where she was sent until some time after the train had arrived, and so avoid seeing any one who might come.

Mrs. Ellsworth, wondering what detained Millie, went several times to look if she was coming. At length she saw her, and by her side walked just one of the dreaded visitors.

Poor Millie! she thought she could see the threatening expression on her aunt's face, although far off. She dared not ask the old man in the parlor, so took him into the little sitting-room, until she could present herself before Mrs. Ellsworth for further orders.

"What did I tell you? How dare you act in direct opposition to my will? Where did you pick up that old tramp?" exclaimed her aunt.

"Oh, aunt, indeed he will hear you. Please don't talk so. I will tell you all about it," Millie said, her eyes full of tears.

Stepping softly back, she closed all the doors between the rooms, and returned to say:

"Don't be mad with me, aunt, please. I remained until I thought every one likely to come in the noon train was gone, then started for home. Just out of the village I overtook the old gentleman. He spoke to me; inquired about the different persons in the neighborhood, and then asked me who I was. I told him. Then he said he should ask a night's lodging of uncle. He had heard of his hospitality, and been told every one was warmly welcomed at his house. What could I do? I *did* tell him you were not prepared to receive additional company, as you expected Mr. Devine, and possibly others, from B——. But he said we could put him anywhere. He was tired and hungry, and could not walk much farther. He told me he had studied for the ministry, and preached a little in his young days. Oh, aunt, it is cold in the little sitting-room. What must I do with him?"

"Take him into the kitchen; it is warm there, and a deal nicer than some of these folks' sitting-rooms about here, and, likely, more than *he* has been used to."

"And he is hungry, aunt—"

"I declare this is too provoking; all this trouble and worry just now!" almost cried Mrs. Ellsworth.

"I will attend to everything, aunt. Please don't treat him unkindly," pleaded Millie, gently.

"Well, get him some of those cold biscuits, and there's some of that fry left from dinner; but don't you dare touch those pies, nor that baked chicken."

"May I give him a warm cup of tea?"

"Yes!" snapped her aunt. "But don't you disturb Norah with her work."

Before the doors were closed by dear little Millie, the old man caught her aunt's angry words.

"I'm sorry I have caused you any inconvenience, my good child. Perhaps I had better be getting farther. I may be able to get accommodations in the village," he said, when Millie came in.

"Oh, no, no! I will fix you more comfortable in a little while. Don't mind if you heard aunty. She is so busy just now. It is so cold in here. Would you mind coming with me into our kitchen? *My* work is there, and I want to be with you as much as I can. *I* think it the most comfortable room in the house."

And so the good girl chatted on, trying to make all amends for her aunt's unkindness. She was so happy in waiting on her guest. He saw and felt it, and his heart was full of sympathy for the orphan girl, whose confidence he soon managed to gain.

Later in the afternoon the old man was left alone. Millie and Norah were both called upon to set the table for supper. Mrs. Ellsworth was going to accompany her husband to the depot to bring Mr. Devine. The old man in the kitchen

listened to the preparations going on, and regretted that he was so long deprived of the society of his charming little friend.

Amanda Melvina waited in the parlor, dressed in the most becoming style, to receive the celebrated minister. Little Millie had received her orders to attend to having everything in readiness to put on the table immediately on their return; so, of course, she had no time to dress.

She heard the cars come in, and hurried up Norah, who was putting the finishing touches to her toilet, brought out the silver urn and tea-pot, and placed them ready to fill, when the carriage was heard returning.

Norah rushed out to catch a glimpse of the man she had heard so much talk about; then, in a few moments, she started back, exclaiming:

"Sure, and it's not come that he has!"

Millie ran into the hall to hear her aunt's reply to Amanda.

"No, indeed, he has not come. I declare it is too provoking. I suppose something must have happened. May be he missed the train. Norah, Millie, don't disturb the table. We will have our supper in the kitchen. Mr. Devine will be here to breakfast, perhaps."

Millie was right glad to hear this order, for the old man's sake. They would all be together there, and she knew her uncle's genial nature would relieve much of the embarrassment caused by her aunt's inhospitality.

Soon after supper, Mrs. Ellsworth and her daughter withdrew. They did not think it worth while to exert themselves to entertain "the old tramp," as they called him. Millie and her uncle contrived to make Mr. Peyton's time pass very pleasantly. He had told Millie his name, where he came from, and all about his home.

"We have no daughter, but I trust some day our son will bring us just such a dear, good girl as this one," Mr. Peyton said, patting Millie's little brown head.

The handsome spare bedroom, with the fire all ready to light, remained unoccupied, waiting for the distinguished guest; while in the little cold entry bedroom slept poor old Mr. Peyton. Little Millie had robbed her own bed of its softest and warmest covering to make his as comfortable as possible.

Early Sabbath morn found Mr. Ellsworth again waiting the coming of the only train that day. Again he was doomed to disappointment. Mr. Devine was not there.

Mrs. Ellsworth could not bear "such a cross," as she termed it, with becoming fortitude. She snapped at her husband and snubbed Mr. Peyton until Millie's cheeks tingled with mortification. Church time came. Amanda, dressed in her new purchase, occupied the carriage with her mother. Mr. Ellsworth rather urged his guest to accept a seat with them, but the "old gray coat" would not be welcome, its owner knew. So he declined, saying he would walk along with his little friend.

While Millie made her simple toilet, Mr. Peyton said he would "fix up a bit," and retired to his room for that purpose.

The village church was filled. Every one far and near eager to hear the celebrated minister.

Mr. Ellsworth had made known the great disappointment to the elders, and their own minister was about rising to open the services when Millie and her friend entered the church. Hesitating, scarcely knowing if she might take him to her aunt's pew, she slowly advanced up the aisle. Mr. Peyton noticed her manner; his keen eye quickly sought and found his hostess. Stepping ahead, he opened the pew door, notwithstanding Mrs. Ellsworth's forbidding expression, and assisting Millie in, closed it, and walked on, on—aye, up to the very pulpit! The people looked inquiringly from one to another, Mrs. Ellsworth fairly gasping with indignation.

"Did you *ever* know such presumption!" she whispered to her daughter, and then turned her eyes again toward the old

man. Then the scales fell. She saw the warm greeting, the looks of relief and satisfaction on many faces, and the "tale was told." The "old gray coat" was laid aside, and in an elegant suit of clerical black, the Rev. William Peyton Devine stood before her. She would have escaped from the church, if possible. The climax of her mortification was reached when she saw the one she had labored so hard to entertain carried off by Mrs. Capers to dine.

In answer to Mr. Ellsworth's pressing invitation to return with him, Mr. Devine said:

"No, no, brother, I must divide my time. You took good care of me last night, and I am almost tempted to return with my sweet little companion. But brother Capers is an old friend, and I must spend a little time with him."

Mrs. Capers extended her invitation to Mr. Ellsworth and family, which was of course declined by all save Millie. She was carried off forcibly by Mr. Devine, and welcomed warmly by his hostess. Millie was universally loved.

A few weeks after this, there came to Millie an invitation from Mrs. Devine to visit them. Her aunt was not disposed to have her go, but she had had a bitter lesson, and thought she had better not interfere again with her husband's wishes.

Millie went. The visit was prolonged, again and again, until months had passed, and then came a letter from Mr. Devine, saying:

"My dearest earthly hopes will be realized if you consent. My boy loves 'Our Millie,' and only waits your bidding to give me the daughter my heart has yearned for so long."

And so ended Mrs. Ellsworth's having an eye to the future.

Since that time the reputation for hospitality that "Rosedale" had so long sustained has been undisturbed.

WHAT CAME OF A LAUGH.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"OH, mamma, papa smiled just now; almost laughed right out, I believe! Ain't you glad?" exclaimed Freddie Grafton, the only son of my dearest friend.

These words, said in a voice full of joy, while the boy's eyes were bright and laughing, like his mother's were years before, spoke volumes to me, explaining clearly the sad change I had found in the companion of my childhood and early youth. Each marrying and leaving our village homes, we had been separated for ten years, meeting only the day before for the first time, when I was surprised into exclaiming, as I clasped my arms around her:

"Dear Nellie, how you have changed!"

I had no chance to get a peep into her heart that evening.

Her husband I knew but slightly, having met him but seldom before her marriage.

He had changed but little: a handsome, dignified man, but rather too reserved and quiet to suit me.

What caused the change in Nellie worried me so much, I lay awake many hours trying in vain to account for it.

My mind and heart were both full of these thoughts when Freddie's words reached my ear.

I am sure there was a tear in Nellie's eyes as she glanced hastily at me. Thinking she would have to explain Freddie's words and joyous manner, I suppose, Nellie said:

"You know, Fannie, Mr. Grafton has not a very merry

nature; so when the children see him laughing, they are perfectly delighted."

I shut my lips tightly, and managed to keep the sigh down in my heart, as I thought what a rare thing it must be to see "papa smile."

Nellie, with her arm around her boy, asked:

"What was papa laughing about?"

"Why, baby. Nellie made him laugh—the darling, cunning little thing! I'll go bring her," Freddie answered; and tiptoeing out, he returned soon after with the little four-year-old Nellie, who was an excellent caricature of the present fashionable style: with an immense bustle, trailing skirt, huge chignon, and a hat which must have weighed heavy on the little head, crowded with ribbon, lace, feathers, and flowers.

"Now walk the Grecian bend, Nellie," said Freddie.

"Me's Dolly Varden," she said: and tossing her head, she did as desired.

I laughed right out, loud and long, at the funny little thing, in whom I could see a spark of what her mother was at the same age.

Nellie smiled gently, as her eyes followed her baby girl a little while, and then she said:

"Now go, darling, and tell Norah to undress you. I know she fixed you up."

I learned afterward that Norah was the nurse. She had only been with them three days, and not as yet reduced to proper decorum. She was a merry-hearted daughter of Erin, and, if allowed, would have made the little ones as happy.

"You know how to laugh, don't you?" said Freddie, coming to my side, when little Nellie went out.

"Indeed I do, my boy; and everybody about me knows how, too," I answered.

"Ain't it nice?" he said. "I love to hear folks laugh; don't you?" sitting down beside me, and putting his soft white

hand into mine; no marks of marble-playing, top-spinning, or anything of the kind, on his delicate fingers.

How I longed to catch the boy up and run off, dropping him where my little ones laughed and "went it" generally, to their hearts' content.

"Then why don't you laugh as much as you choose, Freddie?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't care to laugh myself much, but to hear others. Oh, if mamma and papa could laugh like you, I'd be the happiest boy alive! It's like the sunshine to me."

I turned my head away, as the boy talked on. I did not wish him to see the tears which came in pity for those little ones—for him most of all, who I knew felt it so keenly—this living "out of the sunshine."

"Freddie, love, go tell Norah she can take Nellie and Susie to walk; and you go with them, to take care of sisters, my little man," Nellie said, sending the boy away to divert his thoughts, I knew. Turning to me, she said:

"Fannie, I fear you may receive a wrong impression of my husband, from hearing Freddie talk. He is not a harsh or unkind father, I assure you. He loves his children dearly, I know; but he is a little peculiar, I admit. He does not like to have the children noisy or rude. He is proud of them, and does everything in the world he thinks best for their happiness, or rather, their future good. It seems a little strange to me sometimes, and makes me sad, the difference between their childhood and mine. My father, you know, was so full of life and fun; the merriest one in the house; entering into our sport like one of us—laughing, singing, dancing, and just whatever we wished. What a wild set we were!"

"But I never have heard of any one of you going to the State's prison, or being indicted for any criminal offence," I said.

"No. It is wonderful how well all our boys have done—"

"Not a bit," I exclaimed, interrupting her. "Your father raised them properly. You all were raised in the sunshine, not under the shade."

"I understand you, Fannie," she said. "But see how hard it is for me—the change! If my mind and heart had been disciplined, this change would not seem so hard. Mr. Grafton thinks we should prepare the children for the stern realities of life. If they are made playthings of, and indulged in useless whims—"

"Fiddlesticks, Nellie!" I exclaimed, cutting her short. "I know just this: your children are starving."

"Starving!" she cried, in astonishment.

"Yes, starving—their little hearts, I mean—for those things children love so much. That boy almost broke my heart with the yearnings of his. Their father gives them raiment and food, good enough and sufficient; yet denies them that which is just as essential, I think—things to amuse and make them merry. Oh, I saw the tear in your eye when Freddy said those words, which told more than any same number of words I ever heard: 'Papa almost laughed.' Does he frolic with his children; bring them toys; give them parties; take them to shows?" I asked.

She shook her head, saying:

"It is not his nature to be merry, and the other things you have mentioned he thinks useless and wicked expenditures, the money for which had better be given to the poor children. Ours are taught this, and given a liberal amount for the purpose."

"That is all right—giving to the poor, and teaching your children to be charitable. But the depriving them of children's rational, yes, and national privileges—for firecrackers, torpedoes and doll babies I consider as such—is a shame. And denying them the enjoyment of a good hearty

laugh, which is as good as the sunshine, your boy said, is nothing short of a crime. Don't talk of anything, Nellie, like disciplining these little ones' minds; make merry their hearts. You may try to hide it from me, but I know you, too, love the sunshine, and are pining in this shaded and gloomy atmosphere."

"What can I do, Fannie?" she asked, piteously.

"Put your foot down, and determine, for your children's sake, to let in the sunshine on their path."

I said a great deal more to her, but I do not believe she would ever have been able to raise her voice in opposition to her husband.

However, the next day an accident happened to Freddie, that came very near ending the yearnings of his loving heart.

Nellie's home was a very little way from the water, on the banks of a beautiful river. How Freddie ever learned to swim no one knew, or that he could, until he was brought home that morning nearer dead than alive.

Nothing could be learned concerning the accident, save that he was seen by some boatmen struggling in the water; and when one of them got to him, he held, clutching it tightly, a duck, for which they suppose he went out, and was seized with cramp as he turned to go back.

One night, while he still lay delirious with fever, his father and I watched beside him: Nellie the doctor had commanded to take rest.

Incessantly he talked—to mamma, Susie, Nellie, and once my name passed his lips; but never, thus far, had papa's been heard—words of endearment for all others. After a while he was pleading with John, the gardener. And Mr. Grafton drew near, and strained his ear to catch the words.

"Do let me take your gun, John! I can bring her down. Don't you know this is papa's birthday? I want so much to have that duck for him. If he knows I got it for him, may

be he'll be pleased. And oh, may be he will put his hand on my shoulder and smile on me like Willie Reynolds' father does. And then, oh, then I'd be the happiest boy in the world. John, did your father ever talk and laugh with you? Oh, give me the gun. That's you. Steady, steady!"

An instant more, with a glad shout, he sprang up in the bed, crying out:

"I've winged her! Won't it please papa?"

Tenderly the father laid his boy down again, bending over him with a new light in his eyes, as he lay panting and exhausted before him. All the mystery was explained then. To win a smile from papa, the boy had risked his life. I stole quietly out of the room, leaving the father alone with his child.

On the result of that night, I felt sure, rested the future happiness of Nellie and her children.

It was near morning when I peeped into Freddie's room again. Both were sleeping quietly, sweetly; the father's head resting on the same pillow with his boy's, his arm thrown caressingly over him.

I knew then all was well. I need counsel Nellie no further. God, in his infinite mercy, had decided the happiness of all.

I was called suddenly home, a few days after. But I saw the sunshine had entered the father's heart, and knew its rays would give warmth and joy to all around him.

A year has passed since then, and he has brought them to see us. Once more I clasp in my arms the Nellie of olden times. I'm hearing again her merry, rippling laugh, and watching her dancing on the green with her children and mine. Near by stand their fathers. My eldest, a laughing romp of thirteen, coming up to Mr. Grafton, tries to draw him away to the dance. But with smiles as pleasant as those of his host, he declared his feet dreadfully stupid, and cannot be taught to dance; but his heart is with them, keeping perfect time to the music of the children's voices.

WHY HE NEVER MARRIED.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WHY I never married?" said mother's brother—the dearest of our uncles—the kindest man I ever knew. "Why I never married? Well, I will tell you, dear. Shut the door and come closer by. We don't care to have those wild ones with us now. You, my earnest little woman, can understand me best. Long years ago—when at the village school, I may say—I met my fate. I was not a good boy—far from it, dear. Ah! I see your doubting eyes. Nay, spoiled and wayward, aye, wilful and wicked often. It was the easiest thing for me to remain first of the classes, and first in the hearts of the girls, too. I wore the best clothes, carried a watch, and had money enough to win my way among both girls and boys—with all save two—a proud, dainty little miss, who cared nothing for my fine airs, and turned away from the pretty toys I would have given her. She, Clare Howard, and the poorest boy in school, Earnie Heywood.

"He always stood next me in every study. But for him I'd stayed many days from school. If, by my absence he got first, it was the *only* way he could. *I* never could get back again until *he* stayed home again, and that never was unless his mother was sick. I well-nigh hated him, because *she* always was his friend. *His* paltry gifts she always received with smiles.

"Every chance I had to treat him badly I did it. I tried to make him odious to her. I taunted him with his poverty.

Played tricks upon him; rubbed his sums from the slate, and called him a coward. Wrote that word on his desk, on his books; pinned it on his jacket; but *never* could provoke him to fight.

"'Don't mind him, Earnest. Be a man! Don't let this bad boy provoke you,' Clare would say, quietly, and he would turn away. My wrath grew greater every day.

"Once—oh, it was a terrible afternoon! I never remember such a storm; the whole school was awed—the lightning, almost blinding us, had shivered the great oak before the door. Books were all put aside, and we hovered in the centre of the room, around the teacher's chair.

"Soothing words came from our teacher, lines of Scripture to calm our fears, aye, and turn aside my wrath. She tried, I know.

"I felt a hand laid gently on my arm, and—

"'Let's be friends,' whispered near.

"I would not give him my hand. I only moved away in silence.

"Long the storm lasted. At length, near night we could start for home.

"Before the fallen oak we all stopped. He came to me, and said:

"'Why do you hate me? Some day, I hope you will know me and like me better.'

"Again I turned away.

"Our paths were the same, down to a little stream crossed by a rustic bridge. He reached it a little before me, and stopped, saying to the others:

"'We can't cross.'

"The stream was swollen until it almost covered the bridge. Here and there the planks were visible.

"I sang out:

"'I'm no coward. I'll show you how to cross, and then come back for the girls.'

"'Don't! don't!' cried several voices.

"Clare's voice I heard, and his.

"I sprang on the bridge a few steps ahead, and the foothold was lost. The centre had been swept away. I heard the screams of the terrified children, and knew no more until I woke to consciousness in my own bed, my anxious parents bending over me.

"While kissing and caressing me, my mother prayed God's blessing on the brave boy who had saved me—on Earnie Heywood.

"The next day my greatest chum, Ned Jennings, came to see me.

"'Oh, Paul, you will have to give in now! We all will. He is the bravest one among us. He is as brave as any prince in the fairy stories we've read—'

"Ah! only the day before I'd called him the prince of patches. How mortified I was!

"'And we all thought you'd both go down. We did. He had a hard struggle to bring you out. And when he ran forward, he said:

"'Boys, be good to mother. I'm all she's got to love here.'

"'You see he wasn't sure of himself.'

"'And what about Clare?' I asked.

"'Oh, I'm going to tell you. Charley Dale swears he heard her tell Earnie to save you for her sake.'

"Oh, I could not, I dared not believe Charley Dale. He did not stand high for truthfulness. And what did she care for me? Nothing, it seemed. I never knew, I never knew, how it was. Womenkind are strange sometimes.

"Mother said I must send for Earnie. I wanted to myself; yet I dreaded to meet him. I felt so thoroughly ashamed of myself. What should I say to him? How to apologize and thank him?

"I heard his footstep in the hall. Another moment the

door opened, and the noble boy hastened across the room, grasped my hand, and said:

"'Dear old fellow, you are almost well again. How glad I am! I wanted to come up early this morning, but mother thought you would hardly be strong enough to see friends.'

"He talked on, I truly believe, to prevent my thanking him.

"'Oh, Earnie, how can I tell you?' I began.

"'Hush, my dear fellow. You must not talk. You ought to be quiet. Let me talk for you, and myself, too,' he said.

"Just then mother came up, put her arms around and kissed him, saying:

"'My noble, brave boy, how can I ever repay you! But for you I might have lost my darling. I must see your mother and beg of her to let you be partly our boy. Paul wants it, and so do we all. You have two mothers now, dear—you must feel so; and your mother has another boy. Is it not so, Paul?'

"I couldn't speak, my heart was so full; I only held out my hand to grasp his.

"'Don't talk about it so, please don't, 'taint worth it,' Earnie said, tears filling his fine eyes. 'I want Paul to love me—that's enough for me.'

"'We are friends forever, Earnie. I owe my life to you; and as long as I live I will try to prove my gratitude,' I said.

"'Friendship, Paul. Don't use that other word,' he said.

"'Yes, you will, you must be the best, the dearest friend. There, Paul, take off that ring and put it on Earnie's finger to bind the compact.'

"Now, Earnest, we know not what the future may bring, but if the time should come, and in any way Paul can prove his love, will you come to him?'

"'Indeed I will,' he said; and I—well that day I pledged my word and lost more than life.

"I need not dwell on the years that followed. Father begged to be allowed to educate Earnest, but his mother would not consent, only agreeing to take enough money, as a loan, to pay her boy's board in town while he should continue his studies in a public school.

"Neither of us returned to our village teacher. A few weeks after this accident we separated, Earnie going to W——, and I to college.

"Every week he wrote to me; and I grew to watch with pleasure the coming of his letters. I knew he would go ahead, I could see the germ of genius ready to burst forth.

"During vacations we met, spending most of our time together—and nearly every evening somewhere where we knew Clare Howard would be. She was pleasant to me then. A smile always greeted my coming. But I thought to Earnest's friend it was given, and crushed down the hope that would have come. Sometimes Charley Dale's words would come back to me. Oh, if I could have believed them! I loved the pretty, dainty little maid, though without a ray of hope. I tried to school myself to think only of her as a dear friend, and in time to come as Earnest Heywood's wife. Years passed on. First in his school, he was awarded a scholarship in —— College. On and up he went, to carry off the first honors of the college.

"Every hour that could be spared from study he worked, writing and giving lessons. College days over, we began our law studies together.

"In two years we were ready for work—and how he did work! Once I spoke of this to him.

"'You will kill yourself, Earnest. Take it easy, man; you are sure to win all you want now.'

"'Oh, do you not know how much I have to work for? Not money alone, Paul; for a name—for mother—for love!'

"After a few moments he said:

"'I have a letter from Clare. They are coming to town to live—coming here. W—— will be another place to us after that, Paul. Are you not glad?'

"Yes, I *was* glad; I said so. And soon they came. We always went together there—that is, I never went alone. I think he did. I had loved the pretty child—I worshipped the lovely woman. I had never dared to offer any gift to Clare since in school days, when she spurned them. There came over me the thought to try once more. I must—I would.

"We were on our way to see her. A boy with bouquets came up. Earnest stopped.

"'Let me take one to her this time?' I said.

"'Certainly,' he answered; 'for I have a little poetic gem for her.'

"As we were entering the house a friend accosted and detained him a few moments. I went in. I was glad of his delay; I wanted to give, to offer my flowers with no one near.

"'Clare, will you take my flowers?' I asked, timidly, dreading Earnest's coming.

"'Certainly! gladly!' she answered, a beautiful flush deepening on her lovely face. And holding her hand to me, she said in a low voice: 'Why did you speak so? Why should I not take your flowers?'

"'Ah, Clare, I remembered the old days,' I said, sadly.

"'No, no, Paul—forget them. Such thoughts and feelings can never return. You should know me better now.' The last words were uttered very low—merely breathed forth, as it were.

"Earnest came up, to be welcomed with that free cordiality that I had never met."

"Oh, uncle," I exclaimed, "how blind you were! Did you never dream she loved you, and pitied him?"

Gently shaking his head, uncle said:

"Yes, dear, in dreams I often thought her love was mine, but never in waking hours. Sometimes the thought came of what might have been had Earnest been away. But how could she help loving him? For her he worked and lived. She knew it.

"A few days after this I had a letter from father, telling me Earnest Heywood had returned every dollar of the borrowed money.

"On he toiled, gaining gold and fame.

"One day he came to me flushed with success. He had gained a case of great interest. His praise was sounded throughout the town.

"I grasped his hand in congratulation, and felt the ring I'd put on his finger ten years before. It had never left it but once, for a few days, when he had it enlarged.

"I pointed to it, saying:

"'All these years, and you have never proved me yet.'

"'Don't speak of it, Paul! Don't tempt me! I may not be able to resist. I came to tell you something—to—to plead; no, no, not to prove you, Paul. Clare—you know I need not tell you; you know all I am she has made me. For her I've worked. Last night I talked with her brother, I told him all my hopes and plans, and that to-day, if I gained my case, I was going to speak to their father.'

"'Don't do it, Earnest, yet a while,' he said. 'Father is not on your side, nor mother. They favor another.' And then, Paul, he told me who—

"'No, no, old fellow! You don't mean to crush my life out! You will not try to take her from me!' Earnest cried, grasping my hand and holding it tightly.

"'I, Earnest, I? You do not mean it? I win Clare!' Ah, could he have looked into my heart, then he might have pitied me. He would have known how much I gave up for him.

"'Yes, yes, they want to give her to you. Paul, you have not—you are not trying to take her from me?' he cried.

"'God knows I have not,' I answered. And then I asked, 'Have you no doubt of her love?' I knew not my own voice; it was so husky and strange.

"'Oh, God! spare me that! The agony of even a doubt would kill me, Paul. It is not for love alone I am pleading. 'Tis life, man.' I felt his words were truth.

"'What shall I do for you, Earnest? Command me. I'm ready now—waiting to prove my love! Remember the pledge so long ago! Has the time come?' I said.

"'Yes, Paul; go away from here for a while. Give them no hope. Bid farewell, and say, it may be for years. And then they will give her to me. Can you do it?'

His hands were on my shoulders—his soul in his eyes—as he spoke and looked into mine.

"'Yes, it shall be well with you, Earnest. I'm not feeling strong, and travel will do me good.' The promise had scarcely escaped my lips, when he caught me to his arms.

"'Bless you! bless you!' he cried. I went to say good-by; while waiting their coming, for the only time in my life I was a thief. I stole her picture. You shall see it some time."

"I have seen it, uncle," I answered. "Mother has one."

"No, dear. You have seen the picture of Earnest Heywood's wife; not my love. You must see her before she was his. When—when I could love her.

"The farewell to the old folks was given, and I stood in the hall, and her hand clasped mine.

"'For years!' she murmured.

"'For years,' I repeated. There must have been a wail in my tone as I added—'It may be forever.'

"'Why, oh why?' she asked so earnestly, so eagerly, that I dared not linger more. I *could* not and keep my pledge.

"'It's fate,' I said. And tightening my clasp I drew her closer, pressed my lips to hers, and hastened away—away, over oceans, to strange lands. I sought to forget my love. Three years passed ere I heard from Earnest, and only then after writing and giving him my address. I had evaded all news from him. I could not bear it before.

"'I have won my love at last,' he wrote.

"I never saw Clare again, but her image is in my heart still, as dear as ever. And why should it not be dear? There can be no wrong, for Clare is with the angels, and has been many years. There is a little one who bears her name left here to cheer Earnest. And she, our Clare, waits our coming above. *I* want to find her first. I think I shall, for Earnest has more to bind him here, and I—. There, do not look so grieved, my dear. *I* have more where she is waiting. She knows all now. And up there *all* is love."

Uncle Paul's story was ended. I knew then *why* he had never married.

A SPIRIT BRIDE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

ALTON MAYO sat gazing on the portrait of a beautiful little girl that hung over the marble mantel. An expression sad, but of infinite tenderness, was on his fine face, as he murmured:

"Waiting! But 'tis long—very, very long."

At length, but not until the knocking at the door had been repeated, was he aroused from his reverie.

"What is it, John?" he asked, approaching and holding the door ajar.

"A gentleman in the library, sir," answered the servant, presenting a card.

A smile of satisfaction broke over the face so sad a moment before.

"I will be down in a moment; say so, John. And get up a nice supper as soon as possible," he said, stepping back into the room and closing the door.

Then taking from a table a large square of some soft fabric, he mounted an ottoman and threw it over the portrait, completely vailing the beautiful face. A little work-table with its customary appointments was likewise carefully covered. Here and there little articles of a woman's belonging were gathered hastily together, and carefully covered. The music was removed, the piano closed, and then he drew off the handsome cashmere dressing robe, slipped from his feet the beautifully embroidered slippers, and putting them into the

wardrobe, took from it a coat and other slippers. A moment more, and his toilet was completed.

Removing the key from the lock, he went out, closed the door, fastened it securely, and putting the key in his pocket, hastened down to the library.

"Welcome! welcome! dear old fellow!" he said, in a tone that told the greeting came from his inmost heart. His hands extended were clasped and held while his friend, gazing earnestly into his face, said:

"Twenty years, Alton, bring many and marked changes. But I had not expected to find you thus. What has changed the wildest, merriest boy of our number so? You, of all I've met since my return, should have been the least altered. An old bachelor, Ned Austin told me, I should find you; and by my life, I thought you'd make the merriest one in the world. Now old married men like me, with a half score of little ones to take care of, is something to bring grave thoughts and looks to a man; but you—"

"Sit down, Will," Alton Mayo said, and with almost womanly tenderness he drew him toward and seated him in a comfortable arm-chair. "Now go on. And what were you going to say about me?" he asked, seating himself near his friend.

"Oh, well, I was about saying, You, with a bountiful supply of the good things of this world, good-health, and a clear conscience—your eye tells of this last great possession, Alton—and unmarried too, *you* ought not to look so."

"How? I should like you to *think* now, and speak just what you really think," Alton Mayo said earnestly.

"Well, you do not look ill, nor is it a troubled or careworn expression. I hardly can explain, unless— Well, to me you look careless of the world and everything pertaining to it; as if you would just as lief 'shuffle off this mortal coil—'"

"Do you mean that death promises more to me than life?" Alton interrupted, with a sweet, sad smile.

"Pretty much so. Now if, like Ned Austin, you were a widower with motherless children to comfort, I could understand that look."

"Ned—ah, yes; poor fellow! I'm sorry for him. But he will find some one to comfort him before a great while. I know his nature so well. He must find some one to love. He will marry again in a year."

"And you, Alton?" asked William Kendall.

"I have been more truly married for ten years; married in spirit—a marriage that death cannot dissolve."

"Alton, I do not understand you. Tell me. Dear old fellow, think of the days past, and how we swore to be partners, sharing everything we had—apples, cake and marbles, joys and sorrows. Oh, Al, don't you remember the day you spent watching for me, to see whether Flory Darnelle smiled on Dick Carson, in consequence of which Master Thornton gave you such a thrashing? You know you missed every lesson that day, just for me and my love affair. Well, you knew I could not share that thrashing with you, and so you made the best of it, declaring it was not worth dividing, as it was not more than a 'taste for one.' I wonder if the world, and companionship with the men in it, have not changed that nature? How often I've thought of your generous disposition. Every one before yourself—"

"No, no, Will. Those I loved only," interrupted Alton.

"I think otherwise. Well, although I could not share your trouble that day, you remember *you* did my joy. How well I can recall your merry, dancing eyes when, after I had told you Flory had promised me to send back the ribbon Dick gave her, and only care for me, you put your arm over my shoulder and exclaimed, 'I'd take a dozen of Master Thornton's thrashings to bring you such jolly news as that, Will.'"

"Yes, yes, I remember. And Flory, what of her?" asked Alton Mayo.

"Oh, don't you know? The little flirt! She married Dick, after making me think I was the only one she cared for, and just about cracking my brain—not heart. I thank her for it now. I have never regretted her loss an hour, since I knew the one who is my wife. Now, Alton, do tell me of yourself! Some of us boys used to think that little fairy, Master Thornton's granddaughter, would steal into your heart. What was her name?"

"Hush-sh! Not now; not here!" answered Alton Mayo, as the door opened and the servant announced supper.

A half hour after, returning from the supper room, Mr. Kendall's hand was on the library door, when Alton Mayo said:

"Not in there. Come with me, William."

Up until they had reached the door that he had locked an hour or so before, Alton preceded his friend. Pausing and drawing out the key, he said:

"You will know how dearly I prize your friendship, William, by bringing you here. Come in. Here I generally pass my hours when alone. You, Will, are the first one, out of our immediate family, that I have ever permitted to enter here. Sit down. No; excuse me. Take *this* chair."

He drew from his friend the little sewing chair, pushing toward him a cushioned one, saying: "This is her chair."

A strange, inquiring look passed over William Kendall's face, which remained and deepened as Alton moved about the room, uncovering and arranging many articles. Lastly, unvailing the picture over the mantel, he turned and asked softly:

"Do you remember her?"

William Kendall looked, hesitating while his mind flew back far into the past. Then a light of recognition broke over his face, and he exclaimed:

"Yes, certainly. Bless her little heart! Master Thornton's granddaughter, Lilly. Where is she?"

"In the spirit world. Here in this room surrounded by everything which tells of her, here I feel nearer to her. Here the world loses much of its dreariness, and I almost feel her soft breath fanning my brow. Although gone before me—"

"Gone!" said William Kendall, his eyes wandering over the room. "Gone! Surely then but now. It seems to me she must only have stepped out for a moment. Everything speaks of returning."

"Yes, you have caught the impression. I am glad," answered Alton. "Yet she left me more than ten years ago."

This seemed hardly credible to William Kendall. The work-table; the piece of embroidery, with the needle threaded, as if just stuck in; the little gold thimble near by; a dainty handkerchief, crushed somewhat, and looking as if only a moment before dropped—all over the room little things telling of a woman's presence, caught his gaze.

Across the piano was thrown a pretty, soft shawl; near it a little plumed hat. Alton Mayo, following his friend's gaze, arose and opened the instrument. There, lying as if still warm from the hands of the owner, was a pair of little gloves; with them a silver and pearl card case.

"Here, William," said Alton; and opening the little case, he drew forth a card, and held it before him.

"Mrs. Alton Mayo," read William, and asked, in a sad voice:

"Were you really married?"

"Not as you mean," answered Alton.

"How you must have loved her!" said William, looking again on the child's face.

"Yes, I thought I loved the beautiful child; but I knew not what it was to love until she grew to be like this."

Alton drew from his bosom a little velvet case, opened it and held it before his friend.

It was the same face, grown older, more thoughtful in expression, and more beautiful.

"Lovely! I do not wonder you worshipped her. *Do* tell me. You remember I left school the day we had the big fight, and were so agreeably surprised by getting off all scot free?"

"I *do* remember. *That* day began the one love of my life. You know I was the first one called up, when Master Thornton, in great wrath, stood holding that terrible old rod ready for action. He wanted me to tell the names of my companions in the fray. I would not. As the blow was descending, the master's darling sprang from the platform beside him into my arms, her own spread over my shoulders to shield them from the rod. In vain he tried to draw away the baby girl. What a little mite she was! A perfect fairy child, scarce six years then, you know. Firmly she clung, whispering in my ear:

"'Hold me tight;' and with her grandfather she pleaded: 'Promise not to fight, grandpy.'

"In vain he threatened, commanded, and tried to remove her. She was the dearest thing on earth to him, and he handled her gently enough, fearing to hurt her.

"'Say No, grandpy! No, you won't strike him, and I'll come to you.'

"The rod was thrown aside then, never again to be resumed. Of course, he could not pardon me and punish others. After that day I grew to like Master Thornton better, and he me. There was a bond of sympathy between us—our love for Lilly.

"The school was different after this. Even the worst boys became governable. Lilly's eyes possessed more power than any rewards or punishments ever had. To me she was dearer than mother, father, sister or brother.

"School days passed. I parted with her for college life. That was my first sorrow. But her letters were my comfort—

aye, and inspiration; her love the talisman that kept me free from vice. My constant thought was to be worthy of her. I accomplished my purpose at college; did all my friends expected of me, and returned to my darling—still the pure, loving, artless child. Another absence of two years' travel in Europe, and I came home, to go to work—to strive alike for fortune and fame—all for her.

"She had grown to womanhood then, and how I missed the merry freedom with which she was wont to treat me! But then it was I learned what it was to love. The timid, gentle maiden! She was mine; I won her—first her pure love. Master Thornton and all his friends looked upon our engagement as a matter that had been settled years before.

"'Ever since the little fairy with her magic conquered her old grandfather, you have belonged to each other,' Master Thornton said.

"I was very successful—my prospect the brightest. When Lilly was eighteen, they had promised to give her to me. I made this place beautiful for her; but the very week which would have brought my darling to the home I had made for her, a terrible fever seized me, of a contagious type. Friends were advised to keep away. Master Thornton came, by the physician's permission, having passed through the disease years before.

"The day which was to have been my wedding one found me dying, they said. How long I had been delirious I know not. When I awoke to consciousness, Lilly knelt by my bed. She had evaded the watchful care of all, and stolen to my side. In vain I pleaded with her to leave me.

"The days she hovered around me, too ill to make any resistance against her will, I saw how fearful a change had the shock of my illness made in her. Master Thornton and the physician saw it too. They tried to make her careful of herself, but she smiled at their fears and only cared for me.

"The day I was pronounced out of danger, while busy arranging the pillows about me, she fainted. They bore her here to this room. She was never fully conscious after.

"Five days she lingered, during which time I was much with her. I believe she knew *me*, because she grew less restless when I held her hand. Constantly she was murmuring, 'I will never leave him;' 'I'm coming back, love.'

"And often now I almost think she is around me here, and I hear her sweet assuring tones, 'I'm coming back, love.'

"My arms supporting her, her head pillowed on my breast, she, so nearly my wife—died. And I love on, waiting God's permission to find my darling.

"These things of hers they gave me. For the piano I gave them another.

"These cards I had engraved the day I was taken ill. And here"—approaching the wardrobe, Alton took out the robe and slippers he had taken off before leaving the room—"here; she made these for me; I only wear them in this room—here, the dearest place on earth to me. I hope to die here, Will."

"Don't speak of dying, Alton—you, scarce thirty-five. Life has much for you yet, with—"

"Yes, yes, I know it. And I am not gloomy or morbid at all. There is much for me to do, and I'm striving at it—duties to God and man. But, dear Will, I'm waiting—ever waiting!"

"Yes; and ever true to the one love. Married in spirit truly!" William Kendall answered, clasping his friend's hand, and gazing, his own eyes full of sympathy, into those of his friend—those so bright, illumined by the inner light, and speaking so clearly the truth of the words: "Waiting! Ever waiting!"

A POOR LITTLE SCAPEGOAT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"POOR, dear mother! How tired and pale you look! Oh, I wish you did not have to work so hard! Don't get up to fix my lunch! I can do it. But just rest your fingers and eyes a while, and let me tell you something. Wait, I'll get the things out of the cupboard first! There, now; I can eat and talk too. Mother, I want you to fix up a few things, and go out to Aunt Kate's, Saturday evening. I will try to get off early enough for the train, and stay until Sunday evening. You must stay two weeks at least."

"My dear boy, it is impossible. Why, Willie, love, we can neither spare the money nor time," Mrs. Campbell said, with a regretful expression on her careworn face.

"Indeed we can! You know Mr. Barker promised to increase my pay after a while. Well, I've been with him two months, and I'm sure I've done my duty. Tom White told me that he gave him five dollars extra at the end of the second month, and he is sure when he pays me, day after to-morrow, Saturday, he'll do the same. If he does, we can go; and I will send your work, any that comes, out to you. Oh, I've got it all fixed. Tom White says his mother will let me board with her while you are gone, and she won't charge me much either. Now, haven't I got it all arranged?" Willie said, his manly face all aglow with pleasant anticipations.

"You dear, good, little man! I must not call you a boy any longer. You have as much thought and consideration in

that fourteen-year old head, as many men of twenty-five. Yes, mother will do as you wish, if everything comes, as you hope, Willie," Mrs. Campbell answered, tears filling her eyes as they rested on her noble son.

She was a widow, and Willie her only one. Two months previous, he had obtained employment in the dry goods establishment of Barker & Co., with the salary of three dollars a week. The next day when Willie came home, his face was clouded. In answer to his mother's anxious inquiry, he said:

"Well, perhaps I'm uneasy, without good cause. Mr. Barker don't seem so pleasant to me, nor speak so kindly. Something has gone wrong, I'm sure; but I don't see how it possibly can be anything I've done. May be it is some business arrangement that is worrying him."

That night he reported Mr. Barker's mood "no pleasanter," and next day, at noon, he said:

"Be all ready to start, mother. I will change my clothes now, that is, get on a clean shirt and collar. I think Mr. Barker will do right by me, even though something *does* worry him!"

Five o'clock came, and with it Willie. But ere he reached the door, his mother knew he bore a heavy heart. Slowly and heavily fell his coming steps. The door opened and he darted forward, dropped beside his mother, and laying his head in her lap, sobbed bitterly.

"What is it, my darling? Oh, Willie! where is my little man now? Bear up, and tell mother what has well-nigh broken your dear heart!"

"Mother, mother, I am discharged!" Willie sobbed.

The mother's pale face grew of deeper pallor; but she strove to comfort her boy, saying:

"Well, never mind, Willie, you can find another place. I *know* some one will be glad to have my little man."

"No, no; no one will have me now. I can never get employment again," the boy sobbed, more bitterly than before.

"Never! What can you mean, dear?"

"Oh, mother, I must tell you before any one else—everybody will know it soon: Mr. Barker discharged me for dishonesty."

"What! *my* son! Never!" the mother cried. Her pale face crimsoned then with indignation.

"Yes, mother, he says I have taken money several times, and he would not hear me speak a word of denial," Willie said, between his sobs.

"I will go to him—he shall listen to me—and I will demand his proofs," Mrs. Campbell said; and putting aside her sewing, she left the room, to get ready.

"Don't grieve, dear. All will come right before long," she said, kissing Willie, as she started on her painful errand.

An hour after, she returned with a sadder face. She had brought no comfort back.

"He has no proofs, my son; yet circumstances are against you. He says that there are times that you have been left alone in charge of the store; that, in making up the cash account, they have found frequent discrepancies, and he has perfect confidence in every other one employed about him. They have been with him a long time, and this thing has happened only during the last two months."

"Oh, mother, what shall I do? You don't doubt me?"

"I would as soon doubt your father's honesty as his orphan boy's. No, Willie; I know you are innocent, yet we can do nothing save pray to God and trust in Him. He will, in His own good time, make all right, my Willie."

Poor boy! He tried hard to keep up good courage, and went again in quest of employment. From day to day—from store to store—he went.

"Where have you been employed? Have you a recommendation? Why did you leave Barker?" were the inquiries everywhere. The embarrassed manner and faltering tongue of our poor Willie condemned him with all. At last, discouraged, and almost heart-broken, he gave up. Never very strong, his health failed visibly, until a low, nervous fever set in. The physician was summoned, gravely shook his head, and gave but little hope. All through the delirium of fever he would continually beg every one not to believe him guilty, and, in piteous tones, recount the story of his wrongs. Then, in moments when his mind was clear and calm, he would say:

"I had better die, mother. There is nothing now to live for."

"For me, my darling! Live for me!" the mother would cry.

"I would only be a mortification and sorrow, mother. No one will ever trust me again. So I could never help you more."

And hovering between the two shores for many days, he lingered, with no longer moments free from delirium.

At length the time, when life or death would soon be decided, came. Willie was sleeping.

"When he awakes we shall know whether God wills to take him, or that we shall keep him," said the kind doctor.

John Barker was just stepping from his store, when one of his clerks entering, said:

"Willie Campbell is dying, I have just heard."

"Of what?" Mr. Barker asked.

"Some brain disease. He has not been well since he left here, I believe."

John Barker went on, his mind a little troubled.

"I might have dealt gentler with him. Perhaps it was his great poverty that tempted him. I might have saved him."

With these thoughts in his mind Mr. Barker reached home.

His wife was waiting tea for him. He had promised to return early, to meet several friends.

"Come into the supper-room and see the table before you go into the parlor," Mrs. Barker urged.

Her husband's eyes rested with a surprised expression on the table. Almost every article of china and glass on it he had never seen before.

"Borrowing again, Clara?" he said, with a disapproving look.

"No; no more borrowing now. These are all my own," his wife said, smiling.

"A present? From whom, Clara?"

"Not a present, unless you will please permit me to consider these beautiful things a present from my husband. Your money paid for them, John."

"I don't understand you. Please explain quickly, Clara. We are keeping our friends waiting our coming."

"John, you know how long ago I begged you to give me these really necessary articles. Well, you thought you could not spare the money. I knew you could, that you would never miss what they would cost, and you have not. You are just as well off to-day, and I am a good deal better. I took the money—'hooked it,'" she said, with a doubtful smile, "from your money-drawer from time to time, all within the last two months or so. I would let the cashier see me take four or five dollars, just as I needed for the household expenses, and have him make a note of it, and then, on the sly, I would take a dollar or two more; and so I got my beautiful china, and—"

She raised her eyes to see if John was vexed. She had let them wander over the table during her explanation, dreading a little lest he should be displeased.

"John, what is it? What is the matter? Are you ill?" she cried, as he stood looking paler than she had ever seen him before.

"Speak to me, John! What have I said or done so dreadful?" Clara cried.

"God forgive you and me, Clara! I fear we are little less than murderers in His sight. Excuse me as best you can to our friends; I must hasten to the bedside of Willie Campbell. He is dying, I hear. I believed *him* the one who had taken the money that purchased those things, and so discharged him, with the brand of dishonesty upon him. I must go, lest I be too late."

"Forgive! forgive!" Clara cried.

"Pray to God for that, and his young life, Clara," John Barker answered, as he hurried off.

Watching beside the sleeping boy, with the physician and his mother, stood John Barker. Willie had slept long—a sweet, quiet sleep it had been, and hope grew strong in his mother's heart. A slight movement caused all eyes to turn anxiously toward the bed. With a gentle sigh Willie opened his eyes.

"Mother," he called, in a low, feeble tone.

Instantly she was beside her boy, her hand clasping his. His eyes sought the doctor's; a wan smile parted the pale lips, and he whispered:

"I want to live *now*, doctor; help me. I've had such a blessed dream! All will be right soon, mother."

Mr. Barker had drawn back in the shade. The doctor, who knew all then, said:

"Go speak to him, he can bear it. It will do him good."

Softly Mr. Barker drew near. Willie's face grew almost radiant. He tried to raise his hand to welcome him.

"Forgive me, my boy," he cried.

"It's all right," Willie whispered.

"My boy, did you ever think how it might be? I mean

for whom you suffered?" Mr. Barker asked; deep emotion in his tone and manner.

Willie nodded his head and murmured low:

"But I never breathed it. Not *even* to mother. How could I?"

"There, you must be quiet now. Go, mother, and get him something good to eat. Not another word."

Willie was obedient. But they saw the wasted hands clasped; the great, dark eyes raised heavenward, and knew Willie was thanking God for His mercy and goodness.

Yes, Willie lived. And after a couple of weeks of convalescence, went with his mother to make the long wished-for visit.

Mr. Barker paid him for *every* day since his discharge, with the increase hoped for at that unhappy time. And then when the doctor was willing, Willie went back to the store to become an universal favorite. Every one seemed anxious to contribute in some way to his happiness, and atone for ever having doubted him. And to Mr. Barker, who has no son, Willie is becoming almost as dear as if he was his own boy.

Clara joins her husband in all his kindness, ever anxious to atone for the sorrow she had caused Willie. How well she appreciated the noble boy we can know when she said:

"Willie *may* be our boy," and glancing at her little girls, added: "Who knows what the future may bring?"

THE TOUCHSTONE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WHO is that girl that has just passed, Millie? Her face is very familiar. And I really believe she knew either you or me; for although she did not look toward us, I noticed the color deepen on her face, which is very sweet and pretty. Where have I seen her?"

"Come on, Annie. I declare, you are forever publishing the fact of your being 'a young girl from the country.' It is dreadfully rude and vulgar to turn round and stand staring after any one. Do come! There is Mrs. St. John. I would not have her see you acting so in the street for anything," answered Millie, walking on, leaving her friend still standing gazing after the retreating form which had puzzled her. Another call from Millie brought her along, and saying:

"Who is Mrs. St. John? I'm sure I don't care a snap for her. But I do want to remember where I've known that young girl. I've a mind now to take after her, and find out."

"You must not. I would not have Mrs. St. John—" began Millie.

"Oh, pshaw! Mrs. St. Fiddlestick! What do I care for her! I don't know her, and don't want to. Dear me, how that girl's face bothers me! Don't you know anything of her, Millie?"

"Yes; and to stop you before Mrs. St. John comes up to speak to us, I will tell you. Don't you remember, five years ago, when you spent the Christmas vacation with me, the

little blonde that lived next door, and I used to be quite fond of?"

"What! Flory Courtland! You cannot mean her?"

"Yes, that was Florence Courtland."

"Then why on earth did you not speak to her?" Annie asked, with great surprise manifested in her look and tone.

"Oh—why—. Well, you know all my friends are very aristocratic, and if any one of them should see me speaking to Florence, they would wonder so at it. And of course I could not very well enter into an explanation of what her family used to be; so I thought it better not to recognize her. And—"

"What is the matter with her? What has she done?" Annie asked.

"Oh, she has done nothing wrong. Of course not. I thought you knew how very much they were reduced. At the time you met her, rumor said her father had lost nearly everything. But he managed to keep up a pretty good appearance until he died, about four years ago. Then everything was seized by creditors. Flory had to leave school, and go to work to help support the family. She has a brother two years older; they are both in Black's. I used to deal there; but after Florence was employed by them, I ceased going. It was so very embarrassing. We were so very intimate at one time. But of course one has to drop acquaintances sometimes. What are you staring at me so for, Annie? I'm sure it does not improve your appearance to open your eyes so wide."

"Millie Morton, I did not think you were so heartless. I wish I had known that was Florence Courtland. Dear girl! I shall certainly go to Black's to see her before I leave town."

"Indeed I hope you will not, Annie. In fact I must insist that while my guest you will not attempt—"

"Do stop this nonsense, Millie. I know just what you were going to say, and I don't care a straw for your aristocratic

friends. Perhaps the time may come when you may deem it advisable to drop me. I had better prepare myself for it. Five years ago I should have thought it just as probable, as your ever ceasing to visit and be friendly with Flory Courtland. Now you may like it or not, but I am going this very afternoon to call on her; though I cannot invite her to visit me while in town, perhaps I can induce her to come to me next summer."

"Annie, Annie! you surely are not in earnest?" exclaimed Millie.

"Indeed I am. I shall try and make some amends for the cruelty of her former friends," returned Annie.

Before Millie could enter another protest, her friend Mrs. St. John came up, much to Millie's annoyance.

Annie, after being presented to that lady, begged to be excused, and left them.

Where she went Millie knew that evening, when, in the midst of a half dozen of her aristocratic friends, Annie asked of a young gentleman near:

"Do you not remember that lovely little blonde, Flory Courtland? She was in a tableau with you and me five years ago."

"Indeed I do," he answered: adding, "and have often wondered what had become of her. Howard De Vere inquires concerning her every time we meet—which is not often, however. You know he has just returned from India. We thought sometimes he was very deeply interested in Flory—Miss Courtland, I suppose I should say. She must be quite a young lady now."

"Oh, yes, and a very lovely one. But she is not as beautiful as I thought she would be. She is pale, and looks sad. But I hope we shall be able to win the roses back to her cheeks. She has promised to visit me the coming summer," answered Annie, glancing across to where Millie sat, trying to divert her friends' attention from the unwelcome conversation.

"Will you give me Miss Courtland's address?" asked the young gentleman.

"I really forgot to get it myself," answered Annie; continuing: "I found her in Black's this afternoon. But I shall call again before I leave town, and get it. You know"—she hesitated an instant—"her circumstances have changed very sadly since you knew her. She is poor now, with few friends, of course." This was said with a little bitterness in the tone, glancing again at Millie.

"If you remember, De Vere was the Falconer, and Flory his bride, the very last time I saw her," said the gentleman, who, much to Millie's annoyance, seemed determined to keep up the unpleasant theme.

"And how beautiful she looked then! I do not wonder that he should remember, and inquire often of her. I declare, they made an admirable couple that night: he so dark and noble-looking, and she such a fair, tiny, gentle darling."

Annie was interrupted by the servant announcing:

"Mr. De Vere."

Howard De Vere was, in olden times, a great favorite with the girls; and none the less popular when, after an absence of five years, he returned from abroad. Millie did her best to keep him as much as possible from a tete-a-tete with Annie, knowing that she would revive all the interest he had ever felt for Flory Courtland. But her efforts were unavailing. The interrupted conversation was renewed, and joined by Howard De Vere. When he was making his adieus that evening, Millie heard him say to Annie:

"To-morrow evening. Thank you."

"Where are you going, Annie?" Millie asked, when the door closed on his retreating steps.

"To call on Flory Courtland," Annie answered.

Annie's reply put flight to all Millie's hopes with regard to Howard De Vere.

"Annie Ellwood!" she cried, "what are you doing this for?"

"Millie, not to worry you, believe me; only to comfort one so saddened and wounded by the heartlessness and cruelty of former friends. Poor Flory! I think, Millie, if you could have seen her when she spoke of meeting us to-day, you would have regretted your course. I truly believe she really loved you. And you have wounded her so cruelly—just because she is poor!"

"No, no—not that; only—"

"Well, only because you have not the moral courage to put your arm around this pure, gentle girl, and say to your aristocratic acquaintances, 'This is my friend.' You know her origin is as good as any of theirs—better than many. But she is poor, and has to work for her daily bread. *This* is her crime. For this you condemn and desert her," Annie said, her flushed face telling how warmly she sympathized with the poor girl whose cause she espoused so earnestly.

The entrance of Millie's parents ended the conversation that evening, and it never was resumed during the few days more of Annie's visit.

Flory Courtland flitted about her little parlor, arranging the few articles of furniture, to make the room look as cozy as possible. Remnants of happier days were brought forth—statuettes and prized books—and then she sat down to wait for her visitors.

The usually pale face was flushed with a beautiful bloom; the bright light of hope beamed forth from the blue eyes, as she murmured:

"He has not forgotten me."

That day good little Annie Ellwood had called on Flory again, and after having secured her address, whispered:

"Look your best to-night, Flory. I am coming to bring your truant Falconer. But his absence has not been his fault. He has vainly tried to find his bride many times. I met him last night, and promised to bring him to you."

Flory's face crimsoned. She urged, in a low voice, her changed position, her humble home, and ended by saying:

"Thank you, dear Annie; but I think it will be best we should not meet."

"No, indeed! He shall come with me. And do all you can, you shall not escape us. If you go out, we will wait until you return," Annie answered.

And Flory, seeing how determined she was, yielded to her friend's desire, her own heart pleading its cause all the time.

With Howard De Vere was connected the only romance of Flory's life. When a little maiden of fourteen he had been her beau ideal of everything manly and noble. No one had ever usurped his place in her heart since. Yet she never expected he would ever be more to her than a memory of the past.

Howard De Vere was a whole-souled, noble-hearted fellow. With his easy, cordial greeting, he relieved the embarrassment of their meeting. In half an hour after he had entered her home, Flory was chatting away, forgetting all the sorrows and changes of years, and thinking only of the present, so happy and full of hope. Yes, he had remembered her, and fondly too, her heart whispered, after the departure of her guests, when she sat recalling Howard's every look and word.

When Annie Ellwood had welcomed Flory the next summer to her beautiful country home, she drew the happy girl closer to her, and looking into the eyes so full of love and peace, said:

"What tell-tale eyes you have, Florence!"

The bright flush deepened on the sweet girl's face as she asked, in whispers low:

"What have they told you?"

"That Howard De Vere has won his lady-love."

Ten years and more had passed.

Florence De Vere, after a long absence in Europe, had returned to W——. Annie Ellwood, long since married, was visiting her.

Howard declared he had not found a chance, in six days, to get a word in edgewise, they had so much to tell each other: news from home, and news from across the sea.

"Now I think you must be pretty nearly done," said Howard. "You have heard something about every friend and acquaintance you ever had, I believe. No," he added, "I met one to-day that you have not spoken of, and was surprised to notice she avoided speaking to me. Millie Norton it was."

"Millie Andrews," Annie said. "Yes, we had quite forgotten her. Poor girl! Well, I was giving Flory all the good news I could, not the sad."

"Tell me of her," said Flory. "Has she had trouble? I've heard nothing since her marriage. You know rumor declared she had made a brilliant match."

"Yes, true; George Andrews was very wealthy. They lived in a style of unsurpassed magnificence here; but for a short time only. She is now a widow, and dependent on her own exertions for support. She has one child only. George drank himself to death."

"But Millie's parents. They surely could help her?"

"No, Flory. Mr. Norton lived up to every cent of his income; nay, more: went in debt to keep up such a style as Millie wanted, to entertain and *retain* her aristocratic friends. Mr. Norton is dead, and Mrs. Norton is with her son, who is not able to help Millie at all. I have been to see her several times, and urged her visiting me last summer. She declined, and seems to shrink from her former friends."

"Because they do not approach her rightly. I do not mean you, Annie, dear. She shall not shrink from me. I will find her. Dear Millie! How she used to love me, when we were little girls!" Flory said, remembering only Millie's sorrow, and Millie's love in childhood days.

The next afternoon, as, tired and weary, Millie stepped forth from the place of her daily labor, an elegant private carriage drew up. The driver hastened to open the door. A lady sprang out, and with outstretched hands approached her. As if the wheels of Time had turned backward in their course, Flory came to her just as in their childhood.

Such a warm, loving greeting Millie could not resist. With eyes filled with tears, she asked:

"Can you forgive me?"

"Never, if you persist in wearing out your strength in this warm, dusty city—never, if you refuse to grant my petition," answered Flory, again clasping and retaining Millie's hand.

"What do you mean, Mrs."—she hesitated—"Flory?" she said, as Flory looked reproachfully, saying gently:

"Don't speak to me so, Millie, dear. There is a place in heart and home waiting for you to fill, Millie. We want you to come, with your little one, to us. Come help me take care of my children. Be my sister, and their teacher. *Do*, Millie!"

Flory would listen to no denial. She drew Millie with her into her carriage, and insisted on calling for her little girl, to go out with them to the beautiful home, a few miles out of town, which Howard had just purchased.

Howard De Vere's greeting was as cordial as his wife's. The children, with their mother's loving nature, gathered around the little stranger, and made her so happy, that when Millie returned next morning to town, she was forced to yield to the pleadings of all, and leave her child with Flory.

Millie's next visit was prolonged from time to time, until at length she grew to call Flory's home hers. Truly she had proved the difference between her former friends, and the noble woman whose aristocracy was of the highest and truest foundation, coming direct from her Maker—a pure, loving and forgiving heart.

A PERFECT CURE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WHY, Temple, what is the matter with you? Running over an old friend, and not speaking!" exclaimed Charlie Dale, catching his old college chum by the hand.

"Oh, excuse me, Charley; I did not see you," George Temple said, returning the cordial greeting with evident pleasure.

Charley Dale looking up into his friend's face, asked:

"What is it that is worrying you, old fellow? I don't like that expression you are wearing. Come, ease your mind, and heart too, if you can, by confiding in your old friend. Perhaps I can help you," Charley Dale said, placing his hand on his friend's shoulder, and looking at him in the same frank and fond way that he used to when they were boys together.

"Thank you, George. I will tell you, although most likely you will think I magnify my trouble. The case can be explained in a few words. My home, children and everything else are going to destruction as fast as possible. My wife is a hypochondriac."

Again Charley grasped his friend's hand, saying:

"Magnify! No, indeed. *I* know just what that is to endure. I sympathize truly with you. I have gone through the same mill. But, thank God, that is all over now. You must arouse her in some way—"

"I have tried everything, and have despaired entirely," answered Temple, sadly.

"No, you have not. I know you have never tried 'Our Mary Ann.'"

Temple looked inquiringly at Charley, who broke into a merry laugh; after which he said:

"I could not help laughing, George; but I won't attempt to explain about 'Our Mary Ann.' Come home with me to dinner. Do! Then Fan will tell you all about her. I should spoil the story."

"Yes, I will come gladly. I am sick and tired of restaurants. I have been taking my dinner across the street for several weeks," answered Temple.

On their way Charley told his friend of some of his own trials two years before.

"I dreaded to enter the house," he said. "Fan I found for months either in bed or on a lounge, always with the same sad expression. In answer to my 'How are you now, love? Better, I hope,' came ever the same:

"'No, Charles. I shall never be better in this world.'

"I tried in every way to arouse her. All she talked about was dying; all she thought of was dying. Why, I declare to you, she even made her sister fix her clothes ready to robe her for the grave. Ugh! What a time I had!" Charley said, with a visible shiver.

By this time they had reached Charley's home. At the window, looking out, was a pretty, bright-looking little woman, holding up a three-year-old boy to look for papa.

A smile from her, a shout from the boy, greeted Charley. When, a moment after, he introduced George Temple to his wife, the expression of surprise on his friend's face, was so marked that Charley laughed out, saying:

"You cannot reconcile my wife's happy face with my story, can you?"

"It seems impossible," returned Temple, as he hung his hat on the rack, and followed Charley into the dining-room, where a very nice dinner awaited them.

Charley told his wife of his friend's trouble, and added:

"Fannie, will you tell George about 'Our Mary Ann?'"

"After we have finished. I do not want to spoil Mr. Temple's dinner," answered Fannie, with a very expressive little laugh, adding:

"But, Mr. Temple, I can give you hope for Mrs. Temple's recovery, if Mary Ann can be found to attend her, and I have no doubt she can."

Many times during dinner Mr. Temple would look at Fannie's bright face, and think nothing on earth would make him so happy as to see his wife looking as his friend's. And what magic could have worked such a wonderful change? he wanted to ask. Once she caught the expression, and said, with such a cheery voice, that Temple thought no wonder Charley looked so happy, with such sweet music ever sounding in his ears:

"Now, Mr. Temple, I see Charley has been telling tales out of school. And you are wondering and waiting for an explanation of the mystery? Well, come into the sitting-room, and I will tell you the story of 'My Mary Ann.' I think it better than the song."

Fannie rang the bell for little Charley's nurse, and resigning him to her care, began what Mr. Temple was so anxious to hear.

"I had been suffering with chills for many months, and when at last I did get rid of them, I was so reduced in strength, not only bodily but mentally, that I was a misery to myself and every one near me. I could not exert myself to do the most trifling thing. Although my physician assured me I only needed air, exercise, change of scene, and so on, I would not believe him. I thought I had disease of the heart in some

terrible form, and so I made up my mind that I must die before long.

"In vain Charley tried to get me out. Sometimes, perhaps once in six weeks, I yielded. Of course the exertion tired me, and I would return vowing never to try it again. And so I grew weaker and weaker, until at last I remained up stairs, and saw no one but my most intimate friends. I believe Providence sent me Mary Ann at this time. A very few days after her entrance, she was left in full possession of the house. Our cook came informing me 'she was from one of the fust families, and was not gwine to be bossed by any poor white Virginny gal.'

"That same afternoon my young sister was with me, when we heard the hall bell. As several minutes passed, and Mary Ann came not to announce the visitor, or deliver any message, Olive went out to see what it meant. Some minutes, perhaps five more elapsed, and Olive came neither. Then I exerted myself, and by the aid of the banisters went slowly along to the first landing, where, to my great wonder, I found Olive, convulsed with laughter, down on the floor. A sign from her stopped my exclamation, and directed me. I peeped over the banisters, to see Mary Ann. With a large carving knife in one hand, and a tea-cloth over her arm, she stood holding the door partially open with the other. In answer to something I had not caught, she said:

"'No, you can't see her. She's in a poor state of health. In fact we're prepared for her death 'most any hour. She don't see nobody much.'

"'Perhaps I might offer her some spiritual comfort,' was said in tones that sounded to me as coming from the tombs.

"'Spiritual comfort? I don't know what you mean by that; but she has the best of liquors. And if her husband can't comfort her, I don't think sich a looking pusson as you is likely to. You're kind a scary looking, to my eyes.'

"'My good woman, my calling should induce you to treat me with more respect. I am—'

"'Well, who invited you to call? I'd know better what to do if you'll tell me that,' Mary Ann snapped out.

"'You misunderstand me, my good woman. Allow me to come in while I explain. Then you can take my card to your lady,' spoke the dismal voice.

"'No, sir, I don't go and leave you. I don't praise myself by saying I'm good. And how do you know I'm a good woman? But I'll tell you that I'm honest, and kin be trusted; and you'll know that before you go. I had a friend'—Mary Ann always had a friend to refer to in any emergency—'that went up stairs and left just sich a looking pusson as you at the door. When she went for the lady, he went for the silver; and when she come down both was gone—silver and pusson with the long face too. You can't ketch me so. Now say what you come for? I've got my dinner to 'tend to,' snapped out Mary Ann.

"'I am raising funds for the poor heathen children of—'

"He was interrupted by Mary Ann exclaiming:

"'Oh, I know now. You say you're going to preach the gospel to folks in some foreign place. May be you are. But if you're in earnest about it, about preaching, you jest go down to Eastville, and you'll find folks as wants the gospel as bad there as anywhere. But if them Eastvillians don't like you they will raise too much fun for you. Them Jay boys down there—'

"Just then I heard the blinds slammed, and a voice gruff enough exclaim:

"'A perfect idiot!'

"And a moment after, the door closed on whatever more he might have said.

"When Charley came in, Olive related this conversation, and I joined his hearty laugh with the first smiles for many

weeks. We afterward learned the man was an impostor, and were glad he had met his match.

"Olive went home that evening, and Mary Ann came up to keep me company. Charley returned earlier than usual, and drew his chair up to the bed-side to try and amuse me with some news he had heard. Mary Ann sat still, although I made some excuses to get her out. During a pause in Charley's story she astonished us by asking:

"'Mr. Dale, do you know any nice young man that wants a nice young woman for his wife?'

"Charley looked at her a moment, and then asked very seriously:

"'Why, Mary Ann, do you know the nice young woman as wants the husband? Perhaps I might find her one.'

"'La, now, Mr. Dale. You know who I'm eluding to. I'm thinking about it myself,' she said, simpering.

"'It! That means the husband, I suppose?' said Charley. 'Very well, Mary Ann. I wonder that you have not married long ago. You are a pretty fine-looking woman. I will keep a look-out in your behalf.'

"'Long ago!' she muttered, looking not so smiling as before. ''Tain't so *long* ago that I was old enough to think of sich things as husbands. But I could have married, if I had not been young and foolish, but I knows better now.'

"Mary Ann was at least forty-eight, I'm sure. I was tired of her talk, and made her go to bed, and was really provoked with Charley for seeming to enjoy her foolish talk.

"A few days after that, Olive was with me again. I was bluer than ever. She was putting away my furs and winter clothing.

"I spoke of never wearing them again, and expressed my wishes concerning the disposal of different articles. I had no idea of Mary Ann's presence until she asked:

"'Are you disposing of all your clothes, and everything?'

"Neither Olive nor I gave her any reply; but she did not feel at all slighted, and went on to ask, in that simpering manner that really enraged me:

"'Well, now, who are you going to leave your husband to? May be Miss Olive wants to have him herself?'

"I wish you could have seen Olive's face. I thought she would fly at her. And Mary Ann must have had some such impression, for she held up her hand, saying:

"'Don't, Miss Olive. Indeed I didn't mean no harm. Jest let me tell you. I had a friend who lived with jest sich a nice lady as Miss Dale, and the lady was sick, jest like Miss Dale, and she had jest sich a effectionit husband as Mr. Dale; and this lady knowed how sich a nice man couldn't be contented alone in the world; so, before she died, she left her husband to my friend. La! don't I wish I could meet with jest sich luck! And his name was Charles too. When this nice lady was dying, says she:

"'Charles, my dear—'

"Mary Ann's pathetic tones were cut short by Olive's catching her by the shoulders and pushing her out of the room, shutting and locking the door to keep her so.

"Almost every day brought forth something very ludicrous, or dreadfully aggravating. I did not want for excitement constantly.

"She had been with me two months, when our boy was born, and contrary to my expectations, I lived on. I convalesced slowly. When baby was two weeks old, I was propped up in the easy-chair, feeling only well enough to allow my nurse to go home for an hour or so. Olive I had sent out with some little commission. I was left to Mary Ann's care. She came in, and finding me quite alone with baby, said:

"'Dear me! Jest to think of everybody going off and leaving you! So miserable sick too!'

"There was a tone of sympathy in her words, and my eyes filled, as I said:

"'Yes, I am sick, and shall never be better, I know.'

"'Dear, no, indeed. I jest come up to ask you if I could be spared to go to a friend's funeral. She was sick jest like you; not a bit worse. Well, her friends left her, and, poor dear! when they come back she was gone.'

"'Dead?' I gasped.

"'Yes, clear dead. And that's jest the way they'll find you some one of these days.'

"'Go away! Go! go!' I cried. 'You will kill me right now.'

"'La, now, don't get excited! I jest come up to entertain you, seeing how you was left alone. La, you better let me stay,' she urged. With difficulty I got her out of the room. I told Charley about it, and insisted he should send her off. But no, he seemed anxious to keep her, and I cannot tell you the horrible ideas that came into my poor weak brain.

"Well, the crisis came when our babe was two months old. I was still in my room. Mary Ann occupied the entry chamber, to be near, if I needed her at night.

"She came in one afternoon, bringing a friend and asking if she might go out to do a little shopping. I gave her permission, and together they went to her room. I think it was to close the door that I went, and in time to hear the stranger say:

"'She looks *awful* delicate,' and I stayed to hear Mary Ann's reply.

"'That's so. She is going fast, jest like Miss Brown, you know, Jane Martin's husband's first wife. La, Mag, wouldn't I be in luck if the same thing happened to me? You remember Jane lived there; was chambermaid. Mr. Dale is jest sich a affectionit kind of man, and I know he could not live alone in this world. And I say, Mag, don't you think he

said once, right before her, that I was a fine-looking woman! May be I can make them both like me well enough to have the same luck Jane Martin had. Any way, I'm trying. Poor dear! she ain't got much strength left now—'

"I could stand it no longer. I darted out into the hall, pushed open her door, and catching her by the shoulders, cried:

"'I've strength enough left to put you out of the house, and if I'm *going* to die, it won't be while *you* are here.'

"She was too surprised to make any resistance; but as she was going down stairs, she said:

"'I won't worry you, poor dear! It is the strength of *death* upon you, I'm afeerd. I'll come back after it is all over, for the rest of my things, if I want to take 'em off.'

"From that day I grew stronger. I had to help myself until Charley came home, and have been doing so ever since, and really, I bless the day that brought me Mary Ann."

"Where can I find her?" asked Mr. Temple, whose eyes were still full of laughter. "She will be more than all the wealth of earth to us now, I know."

"I have seen her within a month. I will find her, and feel sure she will like to come, with such a prospect of 'jest sich luck as Jane Martin had,'" Mrs. Dale said, in a merry, hopeful voice.

She did find her, and "Our Mary Ann" is now with the Temples. I met George a short time since, and there was a much happier expression on his face. When I saw the change, I felt that a corresponding one had taken place in his home. Since, I have seen Mrs. Dale, and heard from her that Mary Ann is working to our satisfaction, and she has no doubt, in a few more weeks, Mrs. Temple will have strength enough to put her out, and declare that she has had a "perfect cure."

AN OLD-FASHIONED THING!

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"I'LL not forget you, Annie. You have been a dear, good child. I don't know what I'd have done without you these three months. You tended to me as well as any doctor could. I'll miss you awfully when you leave, child," said Aunt Hannah, as she watched Annie packing her trunk, prior to starting for home next day.

The last three months had been very lonely, and arduous too, to little Annie, who came from her happy home in the city to the out-of-the-way farmhouse to nurse her father's aunt, who was suffering with a long and painful illness.

It was a great sacrifice for Annie to make, for she not only left the loved ones at home, missed all the pleasant parties of the gay season, but, more than all, left the society of Charley Ashton, who was of course her lover.

Aunt Hannah cried a good deal when Annie left her; and the good girl, although very glad to get back home, was really sorry to leave the poor old aunt, to whose comfort she was so necessary.

"I wish, aunty, you would leave here, and come live with us. You know father really wishes you with us," said Annie.

"I believe he does, child. But he is a poor man, and there's a powerful many mouths for him to fill without mine. If I could bring him something to help him, I might come. But I'll think about it," answered Aunt Hannah, wiping away the tears with her checked apron.

Annie had been home scarcely a month, when her father came in one evening, handed her a letter, and said:

"Well, Annie, Aunt Hannah is coming. She will be here to-morrow."

"Mercy on us! Why on earth could she not have stayed home, and not afflicted us with her company?" exclaimed Kate, Annie's older sister.

"My daughter, I am grieved to hear you talk so. You will please remember she is my mother's sister; and if you cannot give her affection, you *must* give her respect," said Mr. Moreton, in a wounded tone and manner.

He left the room then, and Kate, when she thought him out of hearing, said:

"I don't care! Aunt Hannah is just as mean and close as can be—hoarding up her money and coming to burden us with her presence. Then she is so very queer. I shall be ashamed to introduce her to any of our friends."

"Oh, Katy, don't speak and feel so! Aunty is old, and may not have many days to remain on earth. We should try to comfort and make her happy, if possible. Indeed, I am glad of her coming. As to her hoarding up her money, she has had but little ever—"

"Oh, nonsense! Uncle Henry, before his death, had sent her, I am quite sure, at least fifteen hundred dollars. Then the money from the products of the farm. I know she ought to have considerable hid away somewhere," said Kate, snappishly.

"What she makes on that poor farm does but little more than pay the rent and hands; and the amount Uncle Henry gave her was spread over a period of about twelve years. If she saved any, it has been by really depriving herself of necessaries, which I trust she has not," Annie replied.

"Well, you need not be so devoted to her; she treated you mean enough, never even making you any present, for all you did for her. But I will not say anything more."

Aunt Hannah arrived the next day, and was cordially welcomed by Mr. Moreton, his wife and Annie. Kate, for her father's sake, tried to be pleasant; but Aunt Hannah knew very soon that Kate was not to be one of her best friends.

A few days after, the girls were busy in preparations for the approaching party.

Kate threw out many hints, hoping Aunt Hannah would take them; but she did not, or would not, understand them.

"If you only had a set of jewelry—that beautiful pink coral one at Black's, for instance—your white swiss, with new ribbons, would do nicely. If papa only could afford it! May be he can; but I fear not," said Kate.

"Never mind, Katy. I shall be very well pleased with myself in the swiss, with the cherry satin ribbons. I don't care for any ornaments," Annie answered, really very much mortified by Kate's broad hints.

Aunt Hannah hobbled out of the sitting-room, and soon after returned, bringing a little box, and handing it to Annie, said:

"There, my dear, I'll give you that breastpin. I set the world of store by it. It was my mother's. But I'd like to see you wear it. There is not another person I love well enough to have wear it. Put it on to-morrow night, and as often as you choose after; but take good care of it. And when I am gone, Annie, open it and put a piece of my hair with the others—my father's and mother's. It is a little old-fashioned, but it is the best I have to give you."

When Annie first opened the box, a look of disappointment and regret came over her face. But as Aunt Hannah went on talking, Annie's expression grew sweet, and sad tears filled her eyes when she answered:

"Thank you, aunty. I will wear it for your sake. But I trust it will be a long, long time before I shall have to do your other wish concerning it."

Kate stepped forward, and when she saw the pin, she did not try very hard to conceal the contemptuous smile with which she regarded it.

An hour after, when she thought Aunt Hannah quite out of the way, she exclaimed:

"The horrid old thing! I would not wear it for anything in the world. As big almost as a soup plate! What will the folks think to see such a looking thing on you? I wonder how Charley, with his exquisite taste, will like it?"

"Kate, please don't talk so. I shall wear it. I would not hurt Aunty's feelings for a diamond pin. She thinks she has given me something very pretty and valuable, and I am not going to disappoint her by not doing as she wishes. If Charley does not approve, then he is not what I think him," said Annie, in a decided tone.

"You are just as queer as she, and will just spoil my enjoyment for the evening. I shall be so ashamed of you, with that abominable thing on! I just wish Aunt Hannah was in her farm-house, or the moon, or anywhere but here!"

"Kate, Kate! if she should hear you, how dreadfully she would feel! You have so little veneration! I could not feel so toward any aged person, particularly our aunt. And truly, if you do anything to make her unhappy here, I will go home with her and take care of her as long as she needs me."

"Indeed, my little saint! and give up Charley?" sneered Kate.

"No; Charley will not be in circumstances to justify our union for several years. In the mean time, I will take care of aunty," Annie answered.

Just then the bell rang, and a moment after Charley Ashton came in.

The subject of the breastpin was immediately introduced by Kate. Charley asked to see it, and a really comical expression was on his handsome face. Kate saw it, and a look of triumph was in her eyes, as she asked:

"Well, Charley, do you think she ought to wear it?"

"Annie knows what she ought to do. Her mind and heart both are always right," said Charley.

"I shall wear the pin," Annie answered, quietly.

"That is right, my darling," Charley said, with a look of mingled love and admiration.

"Another queer one! Indeed, three fit subjects for the lunatic asylum," Kate said, as she left the room.

Aunt Hannah had heard the conversation between her nieces. Her heart was filled with greater love than ever before for the sweet girl who, to save her feelings, would sacrifice her own.

"Dear child! I wanted to try her a little. It seems hard, too. Well, it won't hurt her any. But I wish the pin was not quite so ugly as they think it. I don't, though. It was considered very handsome in its day," she said.

The evening of the party came. The girls were putting the finishing touches to their toilets. Annie was trying to hook Aunt Hannah's pin, which somehow resisted her efforts.

"Will you please hook it for me, aunty? I am afraid to trust it to Kate's fingers; she is not very careful," said Annie, kneeling before the old lady.

Aunt Hannah's fingers were busy with the pin, when she exclaimed:

"There! I've done it!"

"What! broken it, aunty?" Annie asked.

"Yes, child. So you can't wear it to-night. Never mind, I'll have it mended, and you can wear it some other time. I've got another. Although it is not near so showy, nor so valuable, to my mind, it will do. And may be you'll like it as well," said Aunt Hannah, and she hurried out.

A look of resignation was on Annie's face. But Kate, who was well pleased to hear the dreadful pin was broken, then exclaimed:

"It is *too* bad. I thought we should be saved such mortification. But I will venture to say, the coming one is, if possible, worse than this."

"Hush! she is coming," whispered Annie.

"Here, child. They won't make much show, but wear them if you choose," Aunt Hannah said, handing the box to Annie.

The dear girl opened the box with considerable trepidation. But how surprised and delighted she was to behold a beautiful and delicately wrought little pearl pin and earrings.

"Oh, aunt, these are so beautiful, and better suited for this evening. Thank you. I'm so delighted with them."

"Well, well, child, if you are satisfied I am. There is no accounting for taste. I'd sooner have the other. Katy, would you like this after I get it fixed?" Aunt Hannah said, holding the great hair pin toward Kate, with a queer expression.

"Thank you, no, aunt. My taste is not for such *very* valuable and showy ornaments," Kate answered, in a tone not very soft and sweet, not regarding either her father's or Annie's look of warning and entreaty.

"No, indeed, aunty, Kate shall not have it. I really prize it too much to give it up," Annie said, endeavoring to make amends for Kate's unkindness.

Aunt Hannah might have found her new home far from a very happy one, if Annie had not guarded her so closely from Kate's rude and heartless conduct.

But the old lady did not long need the gentle girl's loving care. One night, after she had received her kiss, patting the fair face and blessing her, Aunt Hannah sank to sleep, never to wake to earth's sorrows again.

A few days after they had laid her to rest, Annie brought forward a lock of Aunt Hannah's hair, and unhooking the large pin, handed it to her lover, saying:

"Now, Charley, we will fix this in with the hair of those she

loved. You take out the back carefully with the point of your knife, and I can slip this in without much disturbing the other."

Charley proceeded to do her bidding. He found a little spring, which soon yielded to his pressure, and the pin opened. Between the hair and the gold back was a very closely folded paper. Drawing it out, he unfolded it and displayed to Annie's wondering eyes a bond for *five thousand dollars!*

Annie's exclamation of surprise brought Kate quickly to ascertain the cause. Remembering her indignant manner and unkind answer to Aunt Hannah, when she offered her the pin, Charley could not restrain himself from saying:

"Perhaps it would have been as well if you had not declined this horrid pin, Kate."

"If I had accepted it, I should not have had such luck. It was always intended for Annie."

"Intended for the one whose loving kindness merited it, I think you should say, Kate," said her father, coming up.

Afterward, when looking over Aunt Hannah's effects, Annie found a letter addressed to herself. Opening it, she read:

"DEAR CHILD: When I am gone—which I know will be soon—you will have enough to make you and Charley happy. He is worthy of you. Don't wait any longer for him to make more money. Delays are dangerous. But for such I should not have passed my life in loneliness. I had intended to divide my little with your sister; but for reasons she will understand I have changed my mind, and give all to her who has given me so much love, and comforted my last days. God bless you, little Annie, and make you as happy as you deserve to be."

It is unnecessary to say Charley needed no further urging to hasten his heart's greatest desire.

They were married a few months after, and went to live in the beautiful home that Aunt Hannah's gratitude had enabled

them to purchase. Annie would willingly have given a generous portion of her little fortune to Kate, but her father would not permit it, saying:

"No, my child; I do not think you would be doing right to disregard your aunt's will. Besides, it is a good lesson for Kate, although rather a severe one, from which I hope she will profit."

Kate said she did not care; but all knew she did, and would have liked much to have recalled the past months, that she might have done otherwise. Oh, if she had only imagined that kind, loving actions are sometimes speedily rewarded, and rude, heartless behavior as soon punished, she would most likely have acted differently; if not from the prompting of her heart, from policy she would have treated with more kindness one whose sands of life were so nearly run.

ASHES OF ROSES.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

ISABEL BERRINGER turned away impatiently, her beautiful face wearing a very dissatisfied expression, as she said:

"I do wish, Edgar, you could fix your thoughts on something higher than the style of my dress or hair. The idea of a man knowing about such things is, to me, abominable. If you design becoming a *modiste*, why, it is just as well—"

"Come now, little love, speak right out. Don't waste time in beating about the bush. What is the matter? What have I done or left undone?" Edgar Lorraine said, with a pleasant, indulging smile on his handsome face.

"It is what you are not doing that provokes me!"

"Oh, you little tyrant! Do I not love you enough? Is not my every thought of and for you? Can I not tell the color of every ribbon you ever wore, and remember how every braid of your hair was laid, how every curl fell; and am I not working hard, every day of my life, to get richer for your sake?"

"Richer! I don't care a straw to have you rich; and it is just what I detest—having your thoughts fixed on such things. I am glad, and want you to love me, and think I look well—that is, like my general appearance."

"Isabel, will you tell me plainly how or in what I fail to please you?" Edgar asked, gravely.

"Edgar! Oh, I want you to—to grow great—to make your

name known to fame! I know you can do it! I know you have the power, if you will only use it! Oh, I do envy Cora Melton! How often I have heard persons calling attention to her as the wife of the celebrated author! You used to write perfect little gems. Why have you given it up?"

"Because I learned to love you better than everything else, dear. And, Isabel, perhaps if you could look into Mrs. Melton's heart, you might find longings there for what you possess and care so little for. Rumor whispers she is not happy—that her husband's heart is entirely in the world of his own creation," Edgar said, a warning tone in his voice.

"I'd risk all that, and even be content to be second in your heart, if Fame was my rival. Edgar, I have never told you, because, until lately, I have not thought much or cared about it, but when I was about fifteen a lot of girls went to have our fortunes told. I was to marry a man that was to become one of the greatest of his time, the old witch told me, and—"

"Did she tell you that you would be happy?" asked Edgar, gravely.

"No, but that would be inferred, of course—I knew I should. And it is just this, Edgar. I've made up my mind to—to—"

"Wait until some great man comes along, and then cast me off, I suppose."

"No, indeed. Edgar, you are the only man I shall ever marry. I could never love any other so well. But I am going to wait a while. I am young enough, and you are, too. Now listen, dear: let money-making alone; you have enough to serve you just now. Go to work and win the laurels that are waiting for you. Go travel, study and think for a while, and then give to the world what is in you."

"Isabel, can I not do this after you are mine? For you I will work for all you wish."

"No, no. Go from me; I should retard your progress."

"You cannot mean it? Are you not afraid my love may wax cold, or die out?"

"No, no; you will love me all the more! And, oh, Edgar, I shall just worship you; indeed you must to work, love."

"And go from you, Isabel?"

"Yes, for a while—a few years only—and every day I will write to you."

"Years, Isabel? What if I fail? If illness—oh, you do not love me, or you could not send me from you."

"Edgar, listen. Three years at the furthest I will bid you come to me. If in the meantime you should grow ill, send for me. I fear nothing. I know you will gain all I wish."

"Enough, Isabel. I will strive to please you," Edgar said, a grave, earnest look then in the eyes, which an hour ago were beaming with love alone.

"Yes, even now I see the coming greatness."

"Stop a moment, Isabel. Say, what if, when struggling for fame, snow and ice should gather over and chill the love you have laid aside?"

"Still your gloomy thoughts, love. I will not listen to such. Our love shall never grow cold."

The last good-by had been spoken, the last kiss pressed on her pale face, and Edgar Lorraine's form was fast disappearing. With a sob the proud girl threw herself down on the mossy turf.

Turning for one more look, Edgar saw her another moment, and again kneeling by her side, he said:

"'Tis not too late, dear love. Let me stay with you. Keep the best I can ever give you—the truest love, earth's dearest treasure. Bid me remain, darling."

"No, no, no! I will not be so selfish. I give you to fame. Go, Edgar. Oh, why did you come back?"

"To give and have one more chance for happiness, Isabel."

He was gone again, and turned no more.

"Henceforth my worship shall be no longer at the shrine of woman. I will woo fame, trusting to her for a better reward."

Time passed on, and true to her promise, every day Isabel wrote to her lover, always in the same tone, loving, encouraging, and predicting speedy success.

Scarcely had a year gone by, when in several of the leading papers of the time appeared contributions from an unknown author. The chosen themes and the style suited the people. Soon came earnest demands for the poet's name; but not until the cry was echoed across the great waters was Edgar Lorraine's name given to the world.

Ere the three years had passed, Isabel wrote:

"Come, my laurel-wreathed love."

She dreaded no change in Edgar. Her own love had truly grown greater. How eagerly she looked forward to his return! How endless seemed the days that passed! At length he was coming. Far off she saw the well-known form. She could not sit calmly and wait. Down the garden walk, through the gate, and along the shaded path, she flew to meet him. So loving was her greeting, that it could not have failed to win a warm response.

If those years had wrought some changes—if the ardent, impulsive youth had grown into a quiet, dignified man—Isabel did not marvel, nor then regret. How proud she was of him!

He was all she had wished him to be, and she was satisfied then. There was no chance, or time then, for a deeper communion with her heart. Constantly she was surrounded with helping friends, in busy preparation for her marriage. And after, during the bridal tour, and the festivities which followed their return, she was content in the love he gave her. She gloried in the homage which was constantly paid her husband. What more could she wish?

Ah, as months passed on, in the quiet of their home, came other yearnings. In the hours she sat unnoticed in his library, listening to the rapid movement of his pen, love was gaining a complete possession of every cord in her heart. How she watched his every glance, eager to catch one such as had rested on her in those other days.

"Oh, for only *one* of those happy by-gone hours!" Isabel sighed. And then, when she could hear it no longer, she determined to know her husband's heart, to bring out what love was in it. She could not complain of neglect; he was ever kind and attentive. A smile always welcomed her approach—a quite pleasant smile, but the warmth was wanting, and Isabel's heart trembled as she remembered his words: "Are you not fearful my love may wax cold?"

How earnestly she had tried to melt the ice away! How manœuvred to win a caress or loving word! "Kind, always kind, but oh, *so* cold!" she sobbed.

Dressing, as she knew, *used* to please him best, in soft fleecy white, sprays of green, and bright scarlet berries in her hair, and looping the flowing robe, she went forth to watch for his coming—in the same spot where he had won her, and where she had sent him from her, she waited.

Her heart was throbbing wildly when she saw him coming, and called, "Edgar!"

That tone should have awakened even a dead love; the eager, pleading look in her beautiful eyes have won at least a tender and approving look.

"What is it, Isabel?" he asked in the same tone he had always used since his return—kind enough, but oh! the wanting warmth! She must, she would revive it.

"Edgar, do sit down here for a while," she said, making room beside her on the rustic seat. "How you used to love this place! See, don't you remember you liked to see me dressed like this? You could always fix back my curls, with the sprays, prettier than I."

He was looking at her in a half-absent manner. And she, with her soul in her eyes, stood as if pleading for life. Ay, and so she was, for love was more than life to her then.

"Say, Edgar, *do* tell me, is my hair like you used to fix it, and the dress?"

"It is very pretty, dear. But I have forgotten how I used to like it."

She sank farther back in the seat, her lips tightly pressed, the bright color all gone. Then Edgar drew out a paper, opened it and began to read. A few moments and he pointed to an article, and held the paper nearer that she might see it.

It was a very excellent and just criticism of a late work of her husband's. Time was when Isabel would have devoured every word with the keenest pleasure; but that was past now.

Presently the tea-bell sounded on the air.

"Come," he said, rising, "I am quite hungry."

She sprang up then, with flashing eyes and crimson cheeks.

"Hungry!" she cried. "Hungry; yes, I too am hungry! Starving! Why did you come back to me? Why did you make me your wife, if you knew you could not love me? could not give me the food my heart is perishing for? Why, why?"

"Isabel"—he drew her back beside him on the seat—"let us understand each other, dear. I had no idea you were not happy with me. Why did I marry you? Because I love you, dear."

She shook her head sadly.

"Not as you wish, perhaps. That love was buried here years ago, Isabel. You are standing on its grave now, and from its ashes sprung the laurel tree. I brought you a chaplet from its boughs, and I believed, in wearing it, you would be happy. Don't grieve, my wife. Believe me, I am happy in being with you, and nothing would grieve me so much as losing you."

"Oh, that I could call back those other days! I would give wealth, fame, everything, to call them back, and with them the love you gave me then," Isabel sobbed.

He drew her closer to him, pressed his lips to hers, and said, gently:

"We will do the best we can, Isabel. God grant that love may grow again. Who knows what the future may bring?"

In Isabel's heart hope is growing daily stronger. God, ever loving, has given her the promise of a tiny, but very powerful link, to unite their love. In the holiest of all positions, she may, with their baby's arms encircling both in one loving embrace, win back through it the battered treasure.

"Oh, love! truly thou art the best of all earth's gifts!" Isabel often murmurs. "I have learned to envy only those who possess it most."

HER FACE WAS HER FORTUNE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"JOHN!" The bowed head was raised, and the great honest eyes were looking inquiringly into hers. "Be my friend, John. You know I have but very few; and no brother, unless you will let me claim you as such."

"Oh, Olive! don't talk to me thus. Child, I must get away, far away from you. You will have *him*. What more do you wish?"

The strong frame was quivering with emotion as John turned away to hide a tear.

"John, may not a wife need a brother's affection sometimes? Be my brother, John. Why must you cast me off because I've promised to be Willis's wife?"

"Cast you off, Olive? Heaven forbid! You can't understand, child, how great my sorrow is. I must go away for a while—perhaps to return, and be all you wish. But not now; not now! But I won't grieve you by talking of it. Now kiss me good-bye, just as you used to when you were a baby girl and I was your big brother."

She raised her face, a little pale and sad then, but wonderfully beautiful, to give the parting kiss. John held the little face a moment between his hands, and said very gravely:

"I wish you were not so beautiful, Olive. Oh, if you only had a plain little face, with eyes not so bright, and hair of a less sunny hue, I might have kept you. It's your beauty,

child, that *he* cares for, and John loves Olive's true self, and not the form she wears. There!"

He pressed his lips to hers, looked long into the beautiful eyes, smoothed the golden hair, and with a fervent "God bless and keep you!" he hastened away.

Olive Newton was an orphan, left to the care of John's mother by a distant cousin. Mrs. Wentworth loved the little orphan dearly; and John, her self-constituted guardian, really idolized his little charge. He was twelve years old when Olive came to live in his home, and "just ten years younger was she," he often reminded her. It was a sad day to the little household when a wealthy relative claimed Olive, and took her to her own home. With oft repeated promises to return and be their sister again, the little fifteen-year-old maiden left the companions of her childhood.

John was almost broken-hearted. Home was no longer home after Olive went away, and he could find no consolation there. So, six months after, he sought and obtained employment in the same city where she lived, and surprised that little lady very much by presenting himself before her one morning, as she stepped forth to go to school.

"Why, John, surely the fairies must have brought you to me," Olive cried joyously, dropping her satchel and springing into his arms.

"Why, little one?" John asked, his face radiant with happiness.

"Why, I was just thinking of you, and wishing I could see you, you darling old John. How long are you going to stay?"

"Just as long as you do, Olive," John answered. And seeing her surprised look, he told her just the whole story.

"How good you are to love me so! You are the best brother that ever a girl had," Olive answered, putting her hand in his, and walking beside him as she used to years before.

Every day found John a caller at Mrs. Clifton's, Olive's aunt. Everybody that ever knew John respected and liked him. An old nurse used to say that John Wentworth was like a baby, bringing love with him wherever he went.

Mrs. Clifton, with an eye to the future, would have discouraged the intimacy between Olive and her foster-brother, had she not feared that if she agitated the subject, Olive, with the usual perversity of young girls, might think it her duty to love John all the more for the opposition. So for three years nothing occurred to interrupt their pleasant meetings until Willis Mordaunt crossed their path, bringing to John the great sorrow that drove him again farther away from home.

John knew that Olive's marriage was fixed for an early day, and he hastened off before it came. He was in the far West when, three months after, he received from his sister the following letter:

"DEAREST BROTHER: I want you, just as soon as you receive this, to write to Olive. If any one can comfort her, it is you. Dear girl! she is no longer beautiful. But it is not about this she needs consoling. It is for the loss of love. The day that was to have been her wedding one, she was lying fearfully ill with that terrible disease, small-pox. God spared her to us. But oh, so sadly altered! Immediately after her convalescence, she came to us. She wrote to Mr. Mordaunt, releasing him from his engagement, and he has accepted it—that is, she considered it so, as he has never written to her, and never even called at her uncle's office to inquire about her. Of course this is a terrible shock to her. You know what a loving, trusting girl she is. Do write to her very soon."

"Thank God!" exclaimed John, fervently. "Now I may win her. What do I care if her eyes have lost their brightness! Be to others what she may, to me she will ever be beautiful. My darling, stricken little love! That rascal! I knew he was not worthy of her."

Instead of writing, John packed his valise, bought a ticket, and started homeward.

Willis Mordaunt really felt quite badly about "having to give up Olive," as he said; not that he should cease to love her because of her altered looks, but that he really had not the moral courage to marry her. He could never appear with her in public. So, of course, the only thing to be done was to give her up.

He had said this only a few moments before, to a friend in whose editorial office he was then sitting. While glancing over the "exchanges," his eye was attracted by this advertisement:

"WANTED—Information concerning the heirs of Joseph Nelson. Address Messrs. Ferrit & Ketchem, Attorneys and Counsellors at Law, New Orleans."

"If you don't care for this paper, I'll take it with me," he said to his friend.

Receiving permission, he soon after took his departure.

Hastening to his room, he wrote two letters; the first to Messrs. Ferrit & Ketchem, sending Olive's address; the other to Olive herself, begging her to renew their engagement, and declaring it impossible for him to be happy without her. He entreated her to grant him permission to come to her. This letter was sent to her aunt, to be properly addressed. Mrs. Clifton was daily expecting Olive's return, so she retained the letter, wishing to be herself the bearer of joyful news to her niece. So Olive was home again when she received Willis's letter. She had been so disappointed by his seeming indifference, that she almost feared to trust him again.

"He must not see me just yet, aunt. After a while perhaps I may not look quite so hideous," she said; and wrote to Willis that she was still too weak to endure any unusual excitement, and therefore wished to delay their meeting for the present, and her reply to his proposal until after he had seen her.

"Oh, I will win her again; no fears about it. I *must.*

That fortune of her old uncle's will make her very attractive, and the world won't be sympathizing with and pitying either of us. How lucky it was I saw that advertisement in time! I've heard her often speak of the uncle who went fortune-hunting and never returned. The old gent, or rather what he found in his hunt, has turned up just at the right time. But I must be urgent, and win again her promise to be mine before she receives the news," Willis said.

Almost daily he presented himself at Mrs. Clifton's, or sent a note of entreaty to Olive; but, poor girl, she dreaded the meeting terribly.

At last, however, she yielded, and appointed an early day for his coming to her. In the meantime she received a communication from Messrs. Ferrit & Ketchem, informing her that she was the sole heir to all the money left by Joseph Nelson, amounting to very nearly a million of dollars.

She had just received this intelligence, when John's card was brought to her. Not for an instant did she dread a meeting with *him.* She knew she would always be dear to him, no matter how fearful the ravages of disease or time.

John was so happy at seeing her again, so joyous with the hope of winning her.

His cheerfulness did her more good than the intelligence conveyed by Ferrit & Ketchem. He had been with her several hours before she placed in his hands the letter from those gentlemen. And then she told him of Willis, her doubts for a time, and his entreaties since.

Poor John! Quickly the clouds gathered over his sunshine. Manfully he strove to hide his disappointment, for her sake. She saw the change, but did not understand the cause.

"You doubt Willis? Indeed you do him injustice. I know what you think. But 'tis not so. Long before this news could possibly have been known, he begged me to receive him."

"And you will, Olive?" he said in a low, agitated tone.

"I cannot tell. To-morrow I shall see him. And Heaven only knows what the result will be. My heart is pleading for him, but I fear to listen to it. Oh, John, if he were only like you! If I could trust him! If, when looking into his eyes, I could read my answer as in yours, I should know just what to say. But I cannot read what I see in your eyes now, John. Tell me what it is."

"Oh, Olive, I am wishing your fortune would take wings and flee away."

"Go, go, you cruel brother! I will not have you making such wishes," she said. "But come back to-morrow, John, please; to-morrow evening. I may need your loving advice then," she added, in a tone very different from the merry one with which she had answered him.

Willis Mordaunt was waiting Olive's coming in the parlor. He had schooled himself to meet the great change, but it was only by a powerful effort that he suppressed the exclamation of surprise, and almost horror, that arose to his lips.

Olive entered the room with downcast eyes. She dreaded seeing on his face the expression she feared was there.

Willis played his part well. He promised unchanging love; declared she was dearer to him than ever before; and had almost succeeded in making her believe in and trust him again, when the entrance of a servant, bringing John's card, interrupted them.

"Ask the gentleman into the reception-room, and say I will see him in a few moments," Olive said to the man, and then turned quickly to Willis.

His eyes were fixed upon her, and oh! she could not mistake the expression on his face. It was *all* she had feared, and worse. The truth had flashed upon her. In an instant was told the misery of years; should she trust him again?

He feared she might have caught the look he could no

longer restrain, and feigned it was one of annoyance only, saying:

"How provoking this interruption!"

She raised her eyes then, and looking into his, said, with a calm, steady voice:

"It was opportune. Willis Mordaunt, your *face* is more truthful than your tongue. Thank Heaven, I know you now. Why you have sought me again, you know better than I. But enough. I know that I can trust you no more."

She turned and left him, with words of entreaty on his lips.

* * * * * * * *

"Has he gone, Olive?"

"Yes, John, gone forever."

"And you, my child, my darling little Olive, how can you speak so calmly of his going?"

"Oh, because I feel as if I had just been drawn back from the brink of a fearful precipice. I am saved, John, from a life of misery, I know. And it was by your coming I am saved," Olive said, and then she told him all about it.

"Olive," he said, when she had finished, "let me try to make you love me. Oh, child, if you only knew!"

"Hush!" she said. "Put down your ear and let me tell you something."

What she whispered, *I* shall not tell. But what John answered was:

"Thank God! I have won my love at last."

A WILD NIGHT'S RIDE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"TRUST him not, my daughter. I would sooner have you receive the attentions of the humblest man in our village than Albert Barton. I have no faith in his professions. Send him off, dear."

"Father, you are prejudiced against him. You don't know him as I do. He loves me truly. I know he does. Please don't bid me give him up. It would break my heart," sobbed Effie Ashmore.

"I *do* know him, and knew his father before him. They are alike. No woman who trusted George Barton was ever happy—not even the one he made his wife. Effie, I would not have trusted him in the days when my daughter would have been a dowerless bride. How much less *now!*"

"Oh, father, you wrong him; indeed you do."

"No, no, child. Your happiness is the dearest thing on earth to me. To secure this, I would save you from Albert Barton. Oh, why could you not return the affection of the one I would have given you to? feeling assured that he would have made you a *true* husband."

"Father, young hearts will wander, often, far from the judgment of older heads. Albert may have his faults, but I love him; and if you will not give me to him, please do not speak of any other winning my love. I *know* George Wilton is in every way worthy, and—"

"And you, my child, would have been happy in possessing

the love of such a noble man, if Albert Barton had not crossed your path."

"Father, if you would know Albert better, you would find out how you wrong him. If he comes to you, will you listen to him and not treat him unkindly?"

"He is not coming, my child. He avoids me ever."

"Because he knows how you dislike him. May I send him? Please, father!" Her eyes were raised, tearful and pleading, to his.

"I will hear him, Effie, and deal justly and gentlemanly with him."

"Oh, thank you; dear, good father! Now I'm sure all will be right!" Effie exclaimed, smiles chasing away the tears, as she wound her arms about her father and pressed her lips to his.

"God bless and save her from evil," he murmured, as his gaze followed her retreating form.

An hour after, Effie was pleading with her lover.

"Go to father, Albert. Talk to him, and he will know then how good and true you are."

"No, no, my darling. It would be useless. He is prejudiced against me, and nothing I could say would be believed. To convince him of my sincerity, I must *act*, not *talk*. Let me go to him when I am your husband, Effie; then he will know I am not what he thought me."

A frightened look came into the girl's eyes as she raised them to her lover's, and asked:

"How can that be? I cannot be yours unless father consents—"

"Then, Effie, we must part. Your father will never yield. And as much as I love you, I cannot humble myself to beg for you from the man who, without any reason, not only dislikes, but speaks falsely of me. But I would gladly prove to him my worthiness. This I can do only in one way. And

then, darling, as my wife's father, I will go to him and beg his forgiveness, if you wish it. Now you see, my love, our happiness rests alone with you. What will you do? Send me forth, crush all my hopes, and try to comfort yourself by ideas of duty, and end by marrying one your father may choose for you? Or will you go with me?"

On and on he talked, raising the poor girl's hopes, and exciting her fears, until, bewildered, and very miserable with the thought of parting, she promised all he wished—to elope with him the next night.

Endeavoring to quiet the fear which still shone forth from her eyes, Albert said:

"Only for a few hours, love, will you be absent. Your father will not have missed you when we shall be back again, claiming his blessing on our union. All will be well then. The future bright and happy. Trust me, darling, and cast all misgivings from your heart."

"Yes, Albert, I will trust you. But only think how dreadful it is for me to deceive him who has ever been so loving and kind!" Effie said, her eyes filling with tears.

"Nonsense, you sensitive little bird. You will laugh when you think of these misgivings ten days hence. Now listen, dear. To-morrow night I will have a carriage waiting at the foot of the garden. We will ride out to N—— in less than an hour, where my aunt will be waiting with friends to receive us. There we will be married, and return the next morning in time to breakfast with your father. Now smile, and bid me good-night. I must hasten off to make the necessary arrangements."

It was a very sickly little smile which Effie managed to force, as she bade him good-bye. Scarcely had he gone from her when it ended in a sob of real grief. She could not coax herself, notwithstanding all that Albert had said to the contrary, to think of her disregard of her father as anything but ungrateful, and undeserving of future happiness.

When he came in a few moments after, and bent over her with tender solicitude, she could not raise her eyes to meet his, fearful lest she should yield to that loving gaze and falter in her resolution. Feigning headache, she closed her eyes, but sleep came not to relieve her anxious heart, even for a brief hour. Many times, during that long, miserable night, she almost made up her mind to write and tell Albert she could not desert her father; but the thought of giving up her lover, "parting from him forever," as he had told her they should, unless she yielded to his wishes, almost broke her heart. And so, trying to console herself with the hope of a speedy return, and her father's blessing on her union, she arose early the next morning and went about making some little necessary preparations for her marriage.

Mr. Ashmore's business kept him from home nearly all of the day, which relieved Effie's heart of a great deal of uneasiness. If he had remained home, as often, coming twenty times or more before noon, to do something to please her, or claim some attention, never content unless near her, surely her heart would have faltered and failed completely.

It was quite dark when he returned. After supper he bade Effie "good-night," saying:

"I've had a trying day, and must rest now."

Everything seemed to facilitate her going.

"Why should she longer hesitate?" she thought.

An hour after, she stole out and sped quickly to the place where Albert was waiting to receive her.

"My own! my darling, brave little girl!" he exclaimed, as he started forward to receive her, and place her in the carriage.

"Oh, Albert, don't call me brave! I'm wicked; I feel it truly. And you—oh, perhaps after a while, you may—I cannot bear to speak it—you may love me less for this act," sobbed Effie.

"Hush! You shall not talk so, you silly little love! Have you not proved to me your love? which will make me love you *more*, if possible."

He drew her within his arms and tried to quiet her fears, but her heart was throbbing wildly, and her agitation seemed to increase as she was carried farther from her home. At length, Albert, wearied with his fruitless efforts to comfort her, said:

"Effie, this is childish nonsense. Calm yourself and listen to me."

She interrupted him by crying:

"Take me back to papa, Albert. Oh, please! Indeed my heart will break, if you do not! Take me back; papa will forgive us."

A contemptuous smile, which it was well she could not see, was on his lips, as he said:

"Not to-night, Effie. To-morrow, if you wish. I have been waiting for you to get somewhat calm, to tell you that I have been disappointed in my plans, which will delay our union until to-morrow. A few hours only lost. In the mean time you will remain with my aunt—"

"No, no—*no!* Take me home!" she cried, interrupting him. "It will kill papa! Oh, you promised I should return before I was missed! Oh, why did I leave home without his blessing?"

"It is *too late* to repent it, Effie. You are mine now," he said, in a tone new to her ear—cold and cruel.

Poor child! she was too frightened to deny his false words. Never is it too late to repent a wrong action; never too late to retrieve the past, bitter and dark though it may be; never, while on earth, loving friends, with sympathy and help, will meet us; never, while in heaven our Father, who judges the heart alone, knowing its weakness, is waiting to receive us, to bid us be at peace.

At his first harsh words she had withdrawn from his arms, and sank back weeping in the corner of the carriage.

"Effie, will you act rationally, and listen to me?" Albert asked, in a modified tone.

But she only answered:

"Take me home, please, Albert. Let me call to the man to turn his horses."

She sprang forward, and tapped sharply on the window back of the driver.

Immediately, before Albert had succeeded in drawing her back to the seat, the horses stopped; and an instant after, the driver opened the door, and said:

"The harness has given way, and it is so dark I can hardly manage to fix it alone. Will you please, sir, to lend me a helping hand?"

When Albert left the carriage, Effie's first impulse was to spring out and try to find her way back home. But an instant's reflection on the strange neighborhood, the darkness, and the late hour of the night, frightened her. Before she had time to think of any other plan she heard coming steps. The door was closed, and again they were in motion. She heard the cracking of the whip, and the urging of the horses to greater speed. Again she cried:

"Take me home to father. Oh, why did I leave him! Please, Albert, have pity!"

"Effie!"

The tone was loving and gentle. She put forth her hand and peered through the darkness, trying to see his face. Again came the loving tone:

"Effie!" and with it the glad cry of "Father!" and the answering:

"Yes, daughter, you are *safe* with father."

She was sobbing on his bosom. No words of chiding reached her ear—gently soothing her on the way until they

reached home. She made no inquiry of Albert's whereabouts. She felt she had escaped from evil. That hour's drive had revealed to her his true nature. There was more *dread* than *love* in her heart then. All her father's words came back with full force, and she thanked heaven for her deliverance.

"Sleep to-night, love, and to-morrow I will explain all that of course is mysterious now," her father said.

"Can you forgive and trust me again, father?" she whispered, when he met her, with more than usual affection, the next morning.

"I've nothing to forgive, love, for I permitted your going," he answered, as he drew her down beside him.

She looked strangely and inquiringly into his eyes.

"I will tell you about it, love. Yesterday morning John Brooks came to me, and began by saying:

"'Master, when I was a slave you always treated me kind—you and your father before you. Now I'm come to do you a good turn, may be; but, for the Lord's sake, make it all right for me somehow. For I know that Barton blood; they wouldn't mind shooting a darkey any time.'

"'What do you mean, John?' I asked, growing anxious at hearing Barton's name.

"'I ain't certain, myself, sir, what it means; but Mr. Albert's engaged my carriage to be at your garden gate to-night.'

"Thanking John, and promising to provide for his safety, I determined on my course. Having no one I felt so free to ask for assistance as George Wilton, I told him my plan. It needed but a little darkening of Wilton's face, John's coat and hat, to make him pass very well, in the dark, for the driver engaged. I was hid from sight. John we tied, to give him a good story to tell. After you were in the carriage, I mounted with George to the seat. We were about getting to the cross in the road where we intended to halt, and under pretext of

the accident to the harness, get Albert Barton out, when your tapping on the window hastened us. So, my child, while that evil man was cutting some holes in a piece of old leather, to repair, as he supposed, the broken part, I stepped into the carriage. In an instant George sprang to his seat, put whip to the horses, and left Barton to find his way to N—— as best he could.

"I preferred to let you find him out as he truly is. I would otherwise have stopped you last night from leaving home. Effie, my child, tell your father: Do you still think of him as you did? Are you willing to trust your happiness to his keeping?"

"No, oh, no; never speak of him, father. I could never trust him again," Effie answered in a low tone, her face crimsoning with mortification.

"No, my child; never trust any man who counsels you to deceive those who have loved and watched over you all your life. There, there, do not cry. We will never mention this again. My little girl would have been wiser, perhaps, had she not been motherless."

Albert Barton never came near Effie again. Shortly after, he left the village for the far West. George Wilton's continued devotion, and sterling traits of character, at last made a deep and favorable impression on Effie. Her father notices with joy that she makes a careful toilet every afternoon, and, sitting by the window, watches for the coming of somebody. The somebody always proves to be the same body. He is welcomed with a smile which promises the fulfilment of his dearest hopes.

A LIFT BY THE WAY.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

IT was many years ago, before the days of railroads, that the stage-coach came rumbling along the road between Baltimore and Washington. On the wayside a boy was sitting. He looked sick and very tired. Lifting his head, he listened a moment, then said:

"Here she comes! If Jenks is driving, and he looks kind of pleasant, I'll ask him for a lift a few miles. I hope he is. I'm awful tired! I don't believe I'll ever get back the strength I used to have; those dreadful chills shook it all out of me."

He strained his eyes as the stage came in sight, and a disappointed look came over his pale face as he said:

"No, Jenks is not there. It's old Pierce. Well, if I drop down and die on the way, I won't ask him; I can't forget the time I did, and he swore and cracked his whip at me. I wonder how it is some men are so much better than others. Oh, if I live to be a man, won't I be kind to poor boys! Indeed I will. Oh, I wish I was rich! I *do* wish I may be rich some time. I never would see a poor, tired body drag along without giving him a lift. How savage Pierce looks! Well, there is no hope there. I'll get a cool drink from that spring back there, and then walk on."

He went feebly along, got his drink from the crystal spring, then filling again his tin-cup, said:

"Pierce stops here to water his horses; I'll take this nice cool water, for may be somebody may like some."

He had just stepped again into the road as the stage stopped, and an instant after a lady looked out and called:

"Little man, *do* give me some of that water; my little girl is so thirsty!"

She held toward the boy, whose pale face flushed with pleasure at the manner she greeted him, a silver cup.

He hastened forward, filled the cup, and said:

"I'll go back and get some more, lady."

Forgetting for the time his own weariness, in contributing to the comfort of others, he hurried back to the spring, and returned again, panting, to the stage side.

During his absence the lady was thinking of his pale, thin face, and wondering if he had far to walk.

"Mamma, poor boy so tired—see!" said the little girl, as he handed up the water again.

"Have you far to walk, my little man?" the lady asked.

"To Washington, ma'am."

"Oh, dear, dear! You cannot, you must not do so! You will faint on the way. You look ill now. Driver, can you give him a seat by you?" the lady asked, as Pierce came up.

"No, ma'am. If I begin that business, there will be no end to it, and it don't pay!" answered Pierce, gruffly.

"Very well; then I will take him in here, where it will pay—you in money, and me in something of more value, perhaps," answered the lady, handing toward Pierce the amount of fare. She lifted to her lap the little girl, and said:

"Now, my little friend, get in."

Something either in the lady's words or manner made an impression on the rough man, for he came forward, opened the coach door, and said:

"The seat is yours. You paid for it, and if you choose to take your little girl in your lap and let this youngster have it, it's all right. Put up your money, ma'am; I don't take pay twice for one seat."

An approving smile answered him. The door was closed, and in a few moments after the coach was rolling along.

The boy's gratitude was very manifest. His eyes filled with tears, as he said:

"I'm afraid you will tire yourself to help me, lady. You are so kind. I am very thankful. I am dreadful tired."

"No, my boy. Susie is not very heavy, and it gives me pleasure to have you here with us. Have you friends in Washington?"

"I have one, ma'am; the gentleman that has promised to give me employment. He wrote for me to come. I'd not minded the walk two months ago, but I've been sick, and am not strong yet."

"Poor child! I think not. Your friends should not have let you attempt it," said the lady, with a compassionate look.

"Mother wouldn't, ma'am. She gave me the money, but I knew she couldn't spare it. She's a widow, and I've two little sisters. I took the money because I didn't want her to know what I was going to do. After I bid good-bye, I went round to the wood-yard and bought as much as my money would, and sent it home. I knew mother needed wood more than anything else. It's getting cold nights now. Mother will not know I started to walk, because the man promised me not to tell her. I told him just how it was. But now I've had such good luck, I'll tell her all about it some day," said the boy, smiling confidingly at his friend.

"What's your name?" lisped Susie.

"William Upton. Mother and the little girls call me Willie."

"Willie! Oh, I like you ever so much! Willie is such a sweet name. My little brother in Heaven was named Willie," Susie answered.

"The name of Willie is very dear to me. I'm doubly glad to have you with us. You are a good boy, Willie; and I am sure will prove a blessing to your mother. How old are you?" asked the lady, with a sweet, sad look.

"Nearly fourteen, ma'am. I wish I was older, for mother's sake," answered Willie.

"I'm over four, Willie," whispered Susie, confidingly. And "Isn't he a nice boy?" in a lower tone to her mother.

The children soon became very communicative, Susie telling that they were going to see papa, who had just come home from sea; that he lived in a big ship.

At the end of the journey, the kind lady, bidding Willie good-bye, promised to see him again, saying:

"You will do well, I am sure, Willie, and find many friends."

The kind lady, Mrs. Barton, fully intended doing so; but a great sorrow awaited her, which drove from her mind all thoughts of poor Willie. Her husband she found in miserable health, really ill. Every moment and thought were devoted to him. But a few more months, and Susie was fatherless.

Years passed on. Other trials Susie's mother had to bear: loss of friends and fortune; everything was swept away but the small amount of a lieutenant's pension, which, with Susie's help by giving music lessons, secured them a very humble home. Mrs. Barton went twice a year to Washington to receive her pension.

Sometimes a remembrance of Willie Upton would come to her, and she thought she would like much to know something of him; but she had no clue by which to hunt him, having lost the address of his employer, and entirely forgotten his name and branch of business.

One afternoon when Mrs. Barton was returning home, the train was very crowded. Every seat in the ladies' car was occupied when she entered, only a few moments previous to their starting. A gentleman seated near the door arose

quickly, and removing the little baby girl from his lap to the lady's next him, said:

"Please take this seat, madam."

She thanked him, and was about expressing her regret to have inconvenienced the lady, when the intent look of the gentleman caused her to hesitate. She felt annoyed at what she should have thought rudeness, if not for the really eager expression of his fine eyes. He withdrew for a moment his gaze; then, turning again, looked more earnestly, and with a glad smile, said:

"I cannot be mistaken. Time has not changed you so much that I should not know you. But I am sure, even if you have ever again thought of William Upton, you would not know him."

"Are *you* that Willie?—that pale little boy of—"

"Yes, of *twenty* years ago. I am so delighted to meet you," said William, clasping her hand.

"And I you. But why have you never found me in all these years?"

"Because—only think, I never knew your name. Only as Susie's mother I have thought and spoken of you," said William.

"Indeed I thought Susie told you. Barton is my name."

William leant forward, and patting the little baby girl, said:

"This is *my* little Susie. Clara, my dear, Mrs. Barton, my—"

"Willie, the ticket! The conductor is waiting for you," interrupted the beautiful woman next Mrs. Barton.

As William handed the ticket, she said:

"I am so delighted to know you, Mrs. Barton. Willie has so often talked of you, and insisted I should call our little one here Susie."

"Tell me of Susie. Excuse me. I must say Miss Barton now. Or perhaps she is married?" William Upton said.

"No; she is still mine only."

When they reached Baltimore, William said:

"My carriage is here. I shall take you home."

Mrs. Barton demurred, but William insisted, and turning, said:

"Clara, dear, I shall put you in. Excuse me. Go home, and send Dick back as soon as possible. I shall wait with Mrs. Barton in the reception-room."

Handing little Susie into the elegant carriage in which her mother was already seated, William closed the door, telling the man to drive on, drew Mrs. Barton's hand within his arm, and proceeding to the reception-room, seated her, and taking the one next, said:

"Now tell me why your face, which I have remembered as very bright, is shadowed?"

"I have been widowed since the year I met you," Mrs. Barton said, in a sad tone.

Dignity, ease and woman-like gentleness were combined in his manner, and when he said:

"I am going to tell you what has happened to me all these years, and then you will give me your confidence, will you not?"

She could not resist him.

He told her it had been as she had said. He had found many friends, the best of all being his employer, with whom he had remained all the time, rising to higher grades of position until, after fifteen years, he became a partner in the large establishment. A few months before, his friend had died. Being an old bachelor, he left him one-half of his large fortune.

William then drew from Mrs. Barton the story of her sorrows.

An hour after, Susie was very much surprised when an elegant carriage drew up to the door, from which a very handsome young man alighted, and handed out her mother.

Of course she remembered nothing of her stage companion,

but she very soon regarded him with as much favor as the little four-year-old girl did the youth of that time.

"Oh, mother, is it not very strange? his good luck, and your meeting again after all these years? How very handsome and pleasant he is!" exclaimed Susie, when William had gone.

"Don't grow to like him too much, Susie, dear. He is married!"

"Married!" exclaimed Susie, in disappointment.

"Yes, dear. He presented me to his wife. And his little girl is called Susie."

Notwithstanding her mother's warning, Susie's thoughts lingered much on the friend of her babyhood. She fell asleep thinking of him, and dreamed his wife had taken away from her all the flowers and things she prized most, and was fixing them up in her own beautiful home.

When, two days after, William called again, Susie liked him more than the first evening.

When Mrs. Barton inquired how Mrs. Upton was, he replied that she was very well, and anxious to call with him to see them; that he should bring her after a while.

After that visit Susie would not come down to see him, and positively declined his invitations to ride. Many times he visited Mrs. Barton's, but never saw Susie, except, perhaps, for a few moments occasionally, when she would come into the parlor at her mother's earnest request.

Mrs. Barton at length began to think his coming unnecessarily often, and wondered at his never bringing Mrs. Upton, whom he had never mentioned since his second visit. She concluded that perhaps Mrs. Upton did not like his apparent great friendship for them, and therefore would not come. So, determining to push the matter a little and find out, she asked:

"When are we to have the pleasure of seeing your wife?"

"My wife?" returned William, much astonished; and a moment after, with a smile, he answered, "*Never*, unless Miss Susie treats me with a little more cordiality."

"Excuse me; but you spoke of her wishing to come, or I should not have mentioned it," said Mrs. Barton.

"I spoke of my wife! I do not remember it; and shall have to repeat that, unless Susie treats me with more favor, I shall never bring any wife to see you, or any one else," William Upton answered, smiling gently.

"I do not understand you," said the bewildered woman.

"You are very much mistaken, my friend, in supposing I have a wife. I spoke of Mrs. Upton, my mother—"

"And the lady with you in the car?" interrupted Mrs. Barton.

"Did I not present her—my sister?" asked William.

Then Mrs. Barton remembered the interruption in the introduction.

"My sister Clara," continued William. "Now I will tell you, my dear friend, Susie is the only girl I have ever felt like making my wife."

Susie came in just then, and of course Mrs. Barton found it very necessary for her to attend to some domestic duties, and retired. When she returned, an hour after, William, with Susie's hand clasped in his, said:

"*Now* I can promise you that you shall see my wife very often; for Susie has given me permission to call you mother too."

"Little did I suppose I should win such a bountiful reward for that little act of kindness," said Mrs. Barton, when they were speaking of their meeting so many years ago, "or that God would give me a Willie in place of the one I had lost," she continued.

"You told me that day you were sure I would prove a blessing to my mother. God grant I may prove such to Susie's mother too," William said, earnestly.

"I'm sure you will, my boy, and to many others too. Happiness will be brought to many dreary hearts and homes through Willie's good luck."

BETWEEN TWO LOVES.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

MURMURS of admiration greeted Estelle De Courcey's entrance into the ball-room, and followed her, as, leaning on the arm of a tall, elegant-looking man, she was led to the head of a dance just forming.

"How beautiful she is!"

"Who is he?"

"How admirably they are suited!" was whispered in different parts of the room.

"They certainly were made for each other. It is a rare thing to see such a handsome couple. I suppose, of course, they are engaged. Don't he look as if he worshipped her?"

This was said by a happy-looking matron, who had no idea her words were making very miserable a sweet, gentle little woman who sat near her.

"Hush-sh!" whispered her companion; and with a look more significant than her expression, she succeeded in silencing the admiring exclamations.

"Where is she gone?" she whispered a few moments after.

"Who?"

"Why, that little lady who sat next to you."

"Oh, I don't know. I've only eyes for that beautiful girl, and her handsome lover."

"Lover! Why, he has a wife. That was the reason I tried to stop your talking so. She was sitting right beside you."

"Mercy! you are not in earnest? That plain-looking little body the wife of that splendid man?"

"Indeed I am. It was a great surprise to everybody when he married. It was thought that he was certainly engaged to Miss De Courcey. Some lover's quarrel, I suppose, was the cause of their separation. But it is plain enough how much he admires her."

"Dear me! I pity the poor wife. I know how miserable it would make me to have my husband devoting himself so to a handsome woman, and leave me so long. He has not left Miss De Courcey's side a moment since he brought her in. What is his name?"

"Manning. He is considered one of the handsomest men in W——. Mrs. Manning is not beautiful, truly, but she is very much beloved for her gentle, lovely nature. And that's better than beauty, you know."

Hidden behind the curtain of a window near, Dora Manning had heard every word of the conversation in which her name was so freely used. She was miserable enough. Not that she doubted her husband's love, but she was mortified and hurt that the beautiful girl should have made him forget *she* was quite a stranger amid that gay throng, and his promise to return to her very soon. The whispered conversation added very much to her discomfort. Never before had she cared for beauty. Then she felt as if she would willingly resign half the years allotted for her life, to have her husband's eyes rest on her face as his gaze rested on Miss De Courcey's.

She saw him looking about, at last, in search of her. Wiping away the tears, and trying to force to her lips a pleasant smile, she stole out before he drew near.

Still Miss De Courcey was on his arm.

"Where have you been hiding, little bird?" he asked, coming up and presenting the beautiful girl, who said, in an easy, light tone:

"You must forgive me, Mrs. Manning, for keeping your truant so long. We had so much to talk over. 'By-gone days,' you know. And I really forgot that any one else had a greater claim on him."

"Are you tired, Dora?" her husband asked, before she could reply to Miss De Courcey, noticing her pale face.

"I am a little worried about leaving baby so long. You know he is not well, and we promised to return soon. I'm sorry to have to hurry you, but I feel I must go," she replied, putting her hand on his arm.

"Yes, I had quite forgotten. Estelle, you must excuse us."

Three years before, George Manning had fancied himself very much in love with the beautiful Estelle, and rumor declared them engaged. But affairs had not progressed quite so far. George, being rather doubtful of the state of Estelle's heart, had not ventured to offer his. There were half a dozen others to whom she was just as charming. George feared she liked better to trifle with many hearts than secure one. Thinking to pique Estelle into betraying her true feelings, George determined to produce a doubt in her mind of her power over him. To do this, he sought an introduction to Dora Mason.

This quiet, gentle little dove was so directly the opposite of the brilliant, sparkling belle, that George found the change very agreeable. Dora, the little home bird, nestled herself so close to his heart that Estelle was no longer regretted, and soon became almost forgotten.

The spoiled beauty had cared more for George Manning than any other; in fact, she had loved him as much as she was capable; and when the news of his engagement reached her ear, she determined to win him to her side again, if possible.

This was prevented by his marriage within a month after the announced engagement. Estelle had never seen her rival. Their meeting was further delayed by the former leaving her

home to visit an aged relative in the far South, whose heiress she had since become.

They met for the first time the evening we presented them to our reader.

"The insignificant little dowdy! How could he have married her? Oh, won't I make her miserable enough before this season is over! Yes, and he shall wish he never had seen her, or I have lost the power I once had," said the unprincipled girl, as her eyes followed George Manning's retreating form.

Dora, wearied with watching and waiting her husband's return, had fallen asleep in her rocker. George felt annoyed that she had not retired. He had broken his promise, and hoped that she would have been asleep, and consequently ignorant of the late hour of his return.

He spoke to her unkindly for the first time, and, poor little wife! she wept herself to sleep that night, and awoke the next morning very miserable, consequently far plainer-looking than usual.

That night was only the beginning of numberless more spent in the same way.

"Well, if you won't go, you cannot expect me to give up all enjoyment and stay home forever," he answered, when once she ventured a gentle remonstrance.

"Won't go!" She had long since seen he was not very desirous to have her.

Kind friends began to notice the case, and some could not refrain from offering sympathy and advice to the neglected wife.

George had never paused to think of the evil that might possibly grow out of what he considered a harmless flirtation. He was so little at home, he had failed to notice how careworn and thin Dora was looking.

One evening a severe headache kept him home. While Dora hovered about him, bathing his brow and endeavoring

to relieve his suffering, George saw how she had changed during the last few weeks.

His conscience pricked him a little for his neglect, and he asked:

"Are you sick, Dora?"

"No, only anxious," she answered, with quivering lips.

"Yes, Willie has grown very fretful, I notice; teething, I guess. I must try to relieve you. I will be more at home, after this."

"Oh, if you only will, Willie and mamma will both soon grow better," Dora said, with a glad voice; willing that the babe should be thought the cause of her anxiety, if through him she could secure her husband's presence at home.

That night, in her dreams, George heard her sob:

"We will go away, Willie. Papa loves us no more." And again, "It is killing me."

The next afternoon, when leaving, he said:

"I shall be home by six o'clock, and remain with you this evening, Dora."

A glad smile thanked him for the promise.

He fully intended to keep it, and was just stepping from his office, a few moments before that hour, when a servant came up, bringing a note from Estelle.

It was a demand, rather than request, for him to accompany her to the opera that evening:

"Come immediately, if only for five minutes," she wrote in conclusion.

He hastened to obey, and excuse himself for the evening.

The five minutes were extended over two hours, and when George opened the hall door to go, Estelle laughingly said, holding up her watch:

"Prepare yourself for a lecture. See, it will be nearly nine when you reach home." Then, with a sigh, she sang, "'Tis home where'er the heart is."

When he turned, the expression in his dark eye was not that which Estelle expected. It was stern and reproachful. With a light laugh, she asked:

"Where is it, George? In the right place?"

"Truly, yes; with my wife and child, Estelle."

No one came to welcome him on his return.

In the dining-room the supper table waited. Slowly he went up stairs, expecting to meet Dora's reproachful gaze. He opened the door. All was dark.

"Dora?" he called.

No answer came.

Down again into the sitting-room, to find that vacant too. He rang the bell, and soon after heard Bridget's coming steps. He knew by the tread she was ready for him; there was wrath in the sound.

"Where is Mrs. Manning?" he asked.

"Gone," she snapped.

"Gone! Where?"

"It's not for me to be saying, sure."

"Did she leave no message for me—nothing?"

"Your supper. An' it's three hours a waitin' it's been."

"Did she tell you anything to say to me—anything about her going, I mean?"

"She towld me to tell ye nothin'. But of meself I'll tell ye one thing. She waited two mortal hours, an' ye broke your word to her. And it's killing of her that you are, sure. An' it's Bridget Malone that's not sorry she's gone from ye. And if she niver comes back, it will serve ye jest right."

And turning about, Bridget left, with the same warlike tread.

A few moments after, the supper bell sounded. George's appetite had fled; he drank a cup of coffee only.

Dora came not that night. Over his solitary breakfast George grew considerably uneasy with regard to the *cause* of Dora's absence.

She had not returned at noon, nor was there any tidings from her.

At length George determined, if she was not home when he came to supper, he would go to her father's, a few miles out of town, and seek her there. Again he was doomed to disappointment. Throwing himself down on the sofa, he began to review his course for the past two months. "Where *can* she be?" he was wondering, when, as if in answer to his thoughts, Bridget appeared, holding a note from Dora, saying:

"GEORGE—The loss of your love is killing me. I am home now, with those I never should have left. I can bear my sorrow better if I do not see you. "DORA."

Early the next day he went to seek her, but was told she was too ill to see him. He could not bear the sorrowful, reproachful looks of her parents. And when her father asked, "How have you kept the vow you made at the altar?" he rushed out, to return no more until he was called to gaze for the last time on Dora, the wife whose heart he had broken.

A few weeks more, and little Willie had gone to his mother, and George Manning was again free. Truly he mourned for a time the gentle woman who had loved him so truly, whose every thought had been to make him happy.

He determined to avoid the one who had lured him on to so much sorrow. But only a short time passed ere again he was beside her. Again he yielded to her power, and Dora and her wrongs were all forgotten—everything forgotten but the beautiful girl whose promise to be his he had won.

He saw her in Dora's house. Oh, how different was home then—constantly filled with gay company. What he regretted as *wanting* in Dora, he soon grew to deplore in Estelle. She was never satisfied unless in some place of gayety, surrounded by a throng of admirers. He attempted to remonstrate with her, only to be laughed at. It was not long before he noticed

she welcomed another as she had him in days past; another occupied more of her time than her husband. Soon the busy tongue of scandal was at work; and hoping to arrest Estelle's imprudence by gently telling her of the talk she was creating, George went to her. He found her alone, waiting in the drawing-room the coming of the one George had grown to hate.

Her mocking laugh filled his ear, and in reply to his words she said:

"How long have you felt thus about a harmless flirtation? I cannot see any more harm in my enjoying Mr. Dupree's society now, than there was in accepting yours. You were not much concerned about what the *world* said then."

A groan escaped him; for a moment he sat with his head bowed. He thought he heard the sound of carriage wheels: probably Mr. Dupree, to carry Estelle out for the evening.

"Send an excuse, and remain home this evening, Estelle," he urged.

Again her mocking laugh, and the reply:

"I will not."

"I insist, Estelle. If you go—"

"I *shall* go, regardless of your threats, or the world's remarks. You need not feel so much injured. You might have imagined I would follow your example. Did you think you were treating my predecessor very dreadfully when you were won from her side?"

"Hush! Speak not of her! God forgive me for giving the name borne by so pure and true a woman to one so false," he said, his voice quivering with emotion.

"Excuse me, sir; I can find more agreeable company elsewhere. Good-evening," she said, approaching the door.

He sprang forward and grasped his wife's arm, exclaiming:

"You shall not leave this room!"

"Why, George, what is the matter? You have been dreaming. Let go of my arm; you hurt me."

"Dora! Here, and living!" he cried, drawing her closer to the light. "Thank God I have not lost you, darling!"

"Lost me! Why, I believe you are not wide awake yet," Dora said, smiling, and made very happy by his loving words.

"Where have you been?"

"Why, soon after you left, brother came for me. Father had one of his bad turns, and all home were much alarmed. He did not get well enough for me to leave until two or three hours ago. But did not Bridget tell you, or where my note could be found?"

"No, neither last night, nor either time I came home to-day. I have seen no note. I must have fallen asleep here soon after tea, when I was puzzling my brain about your absence," answered George.

"How ugly in Bridget! Well, I am glad to get home. But what were you dreaming of, George?"

"Never mind. It was a horrid dream. I don't want to think of it again. And to prevent your running away again, I shall stay home in future to watch you, and when I go, take you with me. So be prepared."

Estelle's influence was over, the spell broken. How it came about, neither woman ever knew. George kept his own counsel. Whenever his mind referred to the dream he shuddered, and thanked Heaven for the warning so timely sent.

Estelle made earnest attempts to win him back, but he resisted firmly, having had more than enough of *her* society in dream-land.

FORBIDDING THE BANS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WHY do you not speak to me, little May?"

"Oh, I am so surprised! I can scarcely believe such happiness is for me."

"There, you darling, artless little love, I am answered. Thank God for blessing me with your love!" said Carl, drawing May closer within his arms. "But why are you surprised? You must have seen I loved you. Why, what did you suppose I was coming here for?"

"Oh, Carl! I did not dream you were coming to see me. How could I, when Ada is so superior to me in every way, beautiful and gifted? Why, I never expect to be seen even when she is near."

"Hush! you silly little love. Ada is very handsome—the queen of roses—a brilliant beauty—manifest to all—ever showing forth her charms to the best advantage. But you, my darling, like the lovely violet, your loveliness is hidden from the public eye; you are most beautiful to those who know you best," Carl answered, in an earnest tone. A moment after, laughing lightly, he added:

"I trust Ada has not been mistaken. Oh, no; she knows I admired only her talents. She is really a gifted woman; but hers is not the heart I could ever seek to win."

Hidden within the clustering vines near by, stood a girl, whose dark face, at that time, hardly could be imagined ever beautiful. Her lips were tightly pressed, her eyes burning

with a red and fearful light, as she strained her ear to catch every word coming from the lover.

"Never, I swear it! never shall he wed her, if I have to move heaven and earth to prevent it!" she said, as Carl's love tones, calling May "his own darling," reached her ear.

All through the long hours of the night the dark girl paced her room.

"Be strong, heart! Be brave! Faint not," she said; and, clasping her burning brow, cried: "Oh, brain, cease your wild throbbing. Grow calm, and do your work."

Near dawn she sank into an arm-chair, a mocking smile on her lips, as she said:

"His violet! For this miserable, timid, silly child, I am cast aside! Oh, but for a little while only. I swear it! He shall be mine—or no one's."

"Thank you, dear Ada. You do not know how happy your kind wishes make me. I am so relieved, too, to know you understood Carl. Do you know I was just foolish enough to think you might have—have—well—"

"Fallen in love with him, like my foolish little friend," Ada said. "Rest easy on that subject. You know I must be courted a great deal, before I shall yield. So your devoted wants to take you right away from us. I think he is in a great hurry."

"Carl has to be in Paris in October, and he will not consent to leave me behind," May said, softly.

"Fearful some one might win the prize from him. There is no danger of my lover, whenever he may turn up, fearing to lose me."

"Why, Ada?"

"Why, I am a poor girl, with nothing but my heart to offer."

"Ada, how can you talk so?"

The bright face grew clouded.

Ada hastened to reply:

"There, you silly child! Of course I don't mean that Carl is thinking of any such thing. But no doubt there are many suspicious persons who *will* think and say he is after your fortune. You have known him long enough to have faith in his professions. So bring back your smiles, and let us talk of the trousseau. By-the-by, is not Kate Monroe's marriage rather sudden? She has known Mr. Granger scarcely three months."

"She met him at the same party we met Carl for the first time," May said, smiling.

"Why, dear me, I thought it much longer. It seems so. I guess, my little lady, if your parents were living, they would keep you at home a little longer."

Ada's words had not failed to worry May a little. Not that she doubted Carl, but she feared others might. Still she had not many moments to give to unpleasant thoughts. The hurried preparations required many hands, so May was constantly surrounded with dressmakers and milliners. Carl, on one occasion, made a remark that was remembered by May afterwards, and served to give weight to another's words which brought great anguish to the poor girl's heart.

"'I wish all this fixing was over, and I had you away to myself, darling. I cannot account for it, but I have a presentiment of some trouble—something coming to snatch you from me," he said.

"What could possibly separate us, Carl? Nothing but death; and that would be only for a little while, I know. I would be sure to follow you, if you left me. I could not live," May answered, nestling close to him.

It was the day before that fixed for her marriage. May Bartlett sat alone in her boudoir. At last she had a moment

to herself, and was enjoying the calmness, when a servant knocked, and entering, said:

"There is a lady waiting. She would neither go into the parlor nor reception-room, but bid me say she would like to see you here for a few moments."

"Oh, dear! I thought everybody had finished with me. Bring her up. I suppose it is one of Madame Bouvit's girls."

A few moments after the door opened again, and a woman, very pale, and with an expression of great anxiety, entered.

May immediately noticed the woman's paleness, and quickly rising from an elegant little easy-chair, pushed it toward her, saying:

"Sit down here; you are sick and tired."

The woman was trembling visibly, as she attempted to speak. May said, kindly:

"Rest a little before you talk. Let me order you some wine."

"No, no—don't. You are so kind; and I must give you such a hard blow!" the woman said, her agitation increasing.

"What do you mean?" cried May.

"Here, do you know this man?" the strange woman said, holding toward May a miniature case. Opening it, the gentle girl turned with a surprised look, and answered, softly:

"Why, certainly." Looking from it inquiringly to the woman, she asked, anxiously:

"What have you come to me for? You are acting so strangely, you frighten me."

"Miss Bartlett, I have come to save you. I am Carl Warrener's wife."

That night, May, attended by a faithful servant, left her home. She could not meet Carl again, not even to accuse him of having broken her heart. The strange woman's story was simple enough. Whether or not his wife, May felt assured she

believed herself so. Then Carl's dread of something separating them—the haste he had urged—*all* seemed to convict him.

May sought an asylum with an aged relative, in a retired country farm-house, where she felt sure of having protection and quietude. She wrote a note to Carl, and one to her lawyer, with directions to the latter to close her house and dismiss the servants.

After waiting impatiently some time for May's coming, Carl sent a servant to say he was in the parlor. When the messenger returned, telling him that May was not to be found, and presenting the note addressed to him, Carl's presentiment forced itself again to his mind. Tearing open the envelope, he read:

"Would that I could give you that which you sought. It has proved a curse to me. I would now be a happier woman, if a poorer one. Return to her you should never have deserted, and know that only prayers for your happiness shall ever escape the lips of "MAY."

In vain Carl sought for May. Ada was appealed to, but was just as ignorant of her retreat as Carl.

The lawyer, if possessed of more knowledge, refused to communicate it. And so, at last, weary and disheartened, Carl gave up the search, and resigned himself to what seemed inevitable. Ada's sympathy and companionship was the only comfort he had. But for her he might have gone to complete destruction.

Two years had passed. Carl Warrener stood before the altar, clasping the hand of Ada Farnham.

The minister's voice, in deep, solemn tones, had just uttered the words, "If any man can show just cause why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or forever hold his peace."

The holy man paused. There was a little stir, and a slight girlish figure stepped forth, and in a low, but distinct voice, said:

"I can."

Turning to the speaker, the minister said:

"Speak it, if you please."

She came nearer, throwing aside her vail, and was about to speak, when Carl, dropping the hand of his almost bride, sprang forward, exclaiming:

"Yes, May, darling, if *you* will it, it is so."

"No, Carl, not as you mean, I come; but to prevent your committing a terrible crime. For this only; to save you—to save Ada."

Turning again, she said to the minister:

"He has a wife living."

"'Tis false!" cried Carl.

In the confusion, Ada escaped from Carl's side—how or when, no one knew. Slowly the wondering guests withdrew. When she found herself alone with the minister, Carl, and a few near friends, May told her story.

The pretended wife was found. And from her they obtained the truth.

Ada, knowing the woman's great need and weak nature, had prevailed on her to do her bidding, offering so large a sum that it was impossible for the poor woman to resist.

"Only because my children were suffering I consented," she said.

"Well, the crime is not yours," Carl answered. "Don't fret about it now. Thank heaven that it has ended thus."

May needed but little wooing to fix an early day for their union. She had done Carl such great injustice, she was willing to make haste and make all the amends she could. They never saw Ada again!

AN ACTRESS'S BEST ACT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"HOW can I give you up, my darling? Oh! that I was rich! I'd cling to you though all the world opposed our union! At times I am tempted to forget everything but my love, forsake all but you. What shall I do, Alice?"

"Your *duty*, Frank! If your mother had other sons or daughters to care for her, then you and I might think of our own happiness. As it is, there is but one course, and that is plain enough. Cling to your mother. And I must go on working to support mine. Oh, it is so hard, that we are called on to make this dreadful sacrifice! But I cannot blame your mother. It is quite natural that such a very strict member of the church as she is, should be unwilling to receive an actress as her daughter." Her eyes were filled with tears, her voice with sobs, as she continued: "But though an actress, I am a loving and dutiful daughter, and would be a true and faithful wife—"

They were walking up and down the platform of the station, waiting for the cars. Frank stopped suddenly, caught her hand, exclaiming:

"Alice, I *can't* do it! I love you! I *will* marry you—"

"And make everybody wretched? *No!* Say no more, Frank, or you will make me so weak and miserable I shall be unable to bear up. I hear the cars. Go home—do your duty, and trust the future to God's loving care."

The train came dashing alongside them. Her hand was in

his, her lips raised to receive his kiss, for the last time perhaps, and with "God bless you!" from both, in sorrowing tones, they parted.

The cars were much crowded, every seat on the river side taken; but Alice's sweet face won her the offer of more than one before she had advanced half way down the car. She turned her head, after thanking the gentleman for his kindness, toward the window, not to enjoy the beautiful scenery, but to conceal the tears which continually filled her eyes, as over and over her mind wandered back to the many happy hours with Frank, when both hearts were so full of hope; and now this was the end of it.

She was won from her sad thoughts by the entrance of several passengers at a station, when, to accommodate an old lady, she coaxed a little four-year-old girl who occupied part of the next seat to come and sit in her lap. Before they reached the next station Alice noticed the old lady draw her slight wrapper more closely about her, and turn from the window with a visible shiver. The old gentleman sitting next lowered the glass with a countenance not expressive of great satisfaction, but his neighbor shivered on. Alice unfolded her shawl and wrapped it about the thin, shaking form. Everybody seemed either so much interested in the grandeur of the view just along there, or in their papers and books, that the sufferer had but little attention paid her save by Alice and the old gentleman, who, when he saw how really ill she was, handed to Alice a pocket-flask, suggesting the beneficial effect its contents might have, at the same time taking the little child and resigning his seat, that Alice might better care for the old lady.

Long before they reached New York the fever had come on, and increased so violently that Alice, becoming very anxious, called the conductor, and asked:

"What shall I do?"

"Who is she? Where are her friends?" were the questions in answer, not only from the conductor, but passengers near, who had at length become interested.

But Alice knew nothing of her. No one near knew even her name. She was then delirious and unable to tell. The conductor suggested the hospital. If Alice had decided thus to have relieved her embarrassment, she would have been deterred when the hot, dry hand, which lay in hers, with a convulsive movement clasped her wrist, while the eyes, wild and frightened, were gazing into hers.

"I cannot desert her. She seems to be pleading with me," Alice said.

They had arrived at Forty-second street. The passengers were leaving the cars. A few lingered a moment to inquire about the sufferer.

"Your mother?" asked some. And the good girl shook her head and answered:

"I never saw her before to-day."

And to "What *will* you do?" she returned:

"The *best* I can."

Yes, and she meant just that. She had been tempted to leave the case entirely to the conductor's disposal. "I have enough sorrow of my own, without burdening myself with other person's," she thought. But in a little while her gentle heart, so tender and unselfish, triumphed; and she determined, as she had said, to do the *best* she could for the sufferer.

The conductor procured a carriage, and assisted Alice with her charge into it.

To her boarding-house the poor little actress directed the driver, and then sat down to look the case squarely in the face. For the board, her landlady would wait payment she knew; but for the physician's fees, medicine, and whatever else would be needed, money must be had. How could she raise it? Her income was barely sufficient to defray her own expenses,

and support her widowed mother and invalid sister in the most humble way.

Poor Alice! She had one article, and *only* one, that she could dispose of, and realize a sufficient sum to be of any help in this emergency. It was a pearl ring—a very handsome one, and Alice's sole vanity. It was given her by Miss ——, who was very much impressed, not only with her grace and genius, but likewise her gentle, refined manners.

It was a sore trial, but Alice decided the ring must go.

Immediately after putting her charge into her own bed, she sought her landlady, and told her story. The good woman, although she chided her for having taken this additional burden, called her a dear, good girl, and said:

"God will reward you, surely, and I will help you what I can."

Alice had but a very short time to devote to the sufferer. She hurried out, disposed of her ring, obtained the services of a physician, and returned with him to take the prescription, and have it put up.

Poor girl! she had had no moment to spare to her own sorrow; indeed, it was comforted very much, if not entirely forgotten, by her efforts to soothe and care for the sick stranger. Her heart felt lighter than she ever thought it could again.

Alice was engaged at a first-class theatre, and received liberal pay. But she was suddenly summoned to her mother, who was extremely ill. This separated her from her charge. But the old lady was convalescing rapidly, and the kind hostess promised to take good care of her. When Alice offered to share with her the reward of her labor, Aunt Margaret, as she had asked to be called, said:

"I have a *little* money with me, and I have friends whom I can ask to send me sufficient to pay my board."

She parted with the sweet girl, who she declared had saved her life, with many blessings and many tears.

Alice found her mother "dying," all said, and, kneeling beside her, she resolved never to leave her side again. But her mother did not die; yet a long time elapsed before she was restored to health, and nearly all of Alice's money was spent. The winter was on them; there was no provision for it. Their little stock was very nearly exhausted. This was the gloomiest period of Alice's life. One after another attempt to earn a support failed.

Her little sister Lilly was very ill. At last the darkest day came. Not a dollar was left. The last flour was in the oven; the last tea in the pot. And the poor girl sat with her head buried in her hands, praying for strength and guidance.

She was aroused by a feeble voice, calling:

"Allie! Allie! I am so cold!"

She arose, and taking the pale, sickly little one in her arms, wrapped a shawl about her, and said, with a quivering lip:

"Put that wood in the stove, mother. Lilly is shivering."

"It is the last, child," the mother began saying.

But Alice urged her:

"Mother, Lilly is too cold. We must warm her now, and trust to our Father for more."

"Are you so very cold, my darling?" the loving girl asked, pressing the little form closer to her own, and looking down into the pale, wan face to see how plainly it told of poor and insufficient food.

"Yes, cold, and so hungry too," whispered the little one, piteously.

"Oh, Father in mercy, help me!" Alice cried. "Father of the fatherless, hear my prayer!"

She placed the child in a chair closer to the stove, and was turning to prepare her frugal supper, when a loud knock caused her to turn and open the door. A business-like looking individual, without further bidding, walked in. Presenting a chair to Alice, and seating himself, he said:

"Miss Kent, I believe—Miss Alice Kent?"

Alice bowed her head in answer, her face expressing much wonder and a little anxiety.

"Miss Kent, I have the honor and pleasure of informing you that by the last will and testament of Margaret Brownton, you are the sole heir to her estate."

Alice shook her head, with a sigh of regret escaping her lips.

"You are mistaken. I am not *the* Alice Kent. *I* never knew any such person."

The lawyer, laughing, said:

"My dear young lady, you can't escape the burden that has been cast upon you. But if you will trust me, as your deceased friend did for many years, I will try to make the burden as light as possible. In other words, I should be pleased to serve you in any way connected with my profession. I was Miss Brownton's legal adviser, and wrote her will. You are the young lady who nursed her during her illness in New York?"

"No, no. That person was poor, very poor," Alice interrupted him, saying.

But at length she was convinced. With her heart overflowing with joy and gratitude, notwithstanding the presence of a stranger, she caught Lilly to her breast, saying:

"God has answered my prayer! My darling, you shall grow well and strong now. Only try to keep up a little longer, and Alice will never let you be cold or hungry more."

The keen eye of the lawyer wandering over the scene, perceived, before Alice's words explained, how very timely was the visit with the welcome tidings. Taking from his pocketbook a hundred dollars, he handed it to Alice, saying:

"Miss Kent, it is necessary you should come to the city at your earliest convenience. Allow me to advance a trifle for your use until then."

"A trifle! Why, this is a fortune! It is life to those so dear," Alice exclaimed, thanking the kind-hearted man, as she bade him good-bye.

Scarcely had he gotten out of sight, ere Alice ran down to the village store. Lilly was warmed and well fed that night; yes, and won to smiles by the bright pictures Alice painted for her of the happy future. Gleeful as a child was the dear girl, as she laid her plans to make so many happy.

Of course, the news flew swiftly enough; and those who had treated so coldly the poor little stock actress, smiled pleasantly enough on the wealthy heiress.

Weeks grew into months, but the one for whom her heart waited came not. At length, wearied with vain watching, Alice said:

"Dear Frank, I know his heart yearns to come, but his mind leads him astray. Oh, he does not know me. Well, it is full time I were looking to my own happiness;" and then, like a sensible girl, she sat down and wrote to Frank to come.

He lost no time in doing it, you may be sure; yet there was much embarrassment in his manner until Alice, putting her hand into his, said:

"Talk to me as you did a year ago, Frank."

"Can I forget the changes since then, Alice?" he asked.

"I am not changed, Frank. Now, as then, I am your promised wife," she said, her eyes full of love, looking into his.

"Can you mean it, darling? How can you forgive the past—my mother's unkindness?"

"Frank, I love you," was her answer, as she nestled herself closer within his encircling arm, and then began weaving plans for their future, in the happiness of which his mother was to share as hers.

"Just to think," she said, "of that little act of kindness bringing such a reward—such happiness!"

FIDO'S WARD.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

IN an upper room of a miserable lodging-house, a man lay dying. Beside him, her hand clasped in his, her ear strained to catch the low words of the rapidly sinking man, was a little girl of eight years. On the opposite side of the bed, his head pressed close to the sufferer, was an immense Newfoundland dog. Through the long night he had remained thus—a faithful watcher—while little Nell. slept. At early dawn a token of Fido's uneasiness awakened her, and she sprang up to catch the feeble tones.

"Little Nell., papa wants to speak to you," he whispered—"and you, too, my faithful Fido."

In an instant the dog moved around the bed, and stood beside Nell., the eyes of both eagerly gazing into those of the speaker.

"Here!" drawing from his bosom a little leather bag, he placed it around the child's neck, saying: "Look to it, Fido, old fellow!"

The dog understood him. The little bag was smelt and licked, and Fido turned to his master with eyes full of intelligence.

"Take care of Nell., Fido," the man whispered, his voice growing fainter. Then hiding the little bag beneath her dress, he said:

"Don't let *her* see it; keep it. It is mamma's ring and some papers. Give her anything else she wants, to pay what we owe her, Fido." He placed the child's arm around the

dog's neck. "Take care—mind her, dear old fellow! Kiss—papa—good-by—darling. God, bless—care—" Then a deep sigh escaped his lips, as Nell.'s warm kisses were pressed there. Terrified, she called: "Papa, open your eyes! Speak to Nell. again!"

When no answer came to her, a wild, terrified cry, followed by a piteous moan from the dog, brought the landlady to the room.

"What's it now?" she asked, in a sharp, shrill voice.

"Another spell, I suppose—"

She stopped as she saw the closed eyes and pallid face. Then quickly stepping to the bed, she placed her fingers on the brow and wrist, with an awed expression on her hard face. She said:

"Dead for certain. It comes awful suddent. If I'd thought it was so nigh I'd have hustled him off to the hospital. Just my luck! And how am I to be paid?"

She glanced around the room as if in search of something to pounce upon. Fido's eye was upon her. As she approached Nell., and laid her hand upon the child's shoulder, he drew near, a slight sound of distrust escaping him.

"What's the matter with you? I'm not going to hurt your mistress," the woman said. Turning again to little Nell., she asked:

"Did he leave nothing?"—she was going to say "to pay me," but hesitated; the presence of death somewhat subdued her, and she continued: "No wishes—I mean, didn't he say nothing about what he wanted done?"

"No, no! Only told Fido to take care of me, and said you could have anything we had to pay you. Oh, *maybe* he is not dead. *Please* see, Mrs. Brown. It might only be a faint. Oh! papa, open your eyes—call Nell. again. Oh! if I had only kept awake last night!"

Mrs. Brown again approached the bed, bent over it a moment, and then said:

"'Tain't no use. He's gone, certain."

We must pass over the pauper's burial, and little Nell.'s uncontrollable grief.

Between the orphan asylum and Mrs. Brown's Nell had her choice. In the first she would be separated from her loved Fido. Mrs. Brown had offered to keep both. But "you will have to earn your bread," she had said to the orphan child.

Gladly the little one accepted the offered home.

"We will not be separated, Fido. And we won't care much if we do have to work hard. Will we, dear old fellow?" Nell. said to her constant companion.

His great, honest eyes looked into hers, and answered just as she wished. But neither knew how hard the bread would be won, nor how meagrely dealt out.

For a few days Mrs. Brown was not very hard on Nell. or Fido. She intended to do as well as she could by them. But the world had not dealt very kindly with her, and the constant battle with it had hardened her nature.

There were little Browns of all ages and sizes, and Nell. was a handy little nurse.

From early dawn until almost midnight there was work for Nell. to do. Constantly she heard her mistress calling:

"Rock the baby, Nell. Walk Billy about a bit. Sing Polly to sleep! Run to the pump! Step over to the shop! Did you wash out the hall? Don't forget your kindling for morning. Get the water in the lodgers' rooms."

Never a moment's rest for Nell.

The little bag had escaped Mrs. Brown's notice for several weeks. But one day, when fastening a dress on Nell., she caught sight of it. She attempted to open it, when a low, threatening growl arrested her. Fido was on the watch.

"Let me see what is in it?" the woman asked.

"No; please don't make me. Papa said I must not," Nell. answered.

Of course Mrs. Brown's curiosity was excited. She determined to possess herself of Nell.'s secret. But Fido was ever near. Sleeping or waking he never left his little mistress. Finding herself foiled in every attempt, Mrs. Brown determined to make both suffer for it.

Nell.'s work grew heavier, and Fido's rations lighter, the first accompanied with angry words and threats, the latter often blows; but Fido never resented any ill-usage of himself. Mrs. Brown knew well enough, though, that she must not attempt the same treatment with his mistress, or it would meet with a different reception.

Little Nell. was growing paler and thinner. After a day of unusual toil and harshness, the poor child threw her arms round Fido's neck, and moaned:

"How can we stand it, Fido? You are always hungry, and I all the time so tired! And it grows worse, don't it? Dear old fellow! Let us run away, Fido," she whispered close to his ear. "Look at me, right in my eyes, and tell me if we must go. It can't be worse, Fido, and may be we may find a better home. Oh, if we could only die, and go to papa! Come, shall we go?"

Fido did her bidding. Nell. looked earnestly into his great, truthful eyes, and said:

"That's right; I knew you would tell me. Come, then, let us go now. It is snowing, and they cannot find us. But, oh, Fido where *shall* we run to? You will take care of me, dear, darling old fellow, and I'll ask God to take care of both of us." She dropped on her knees for a few moments, and remained with her head bowed, her faithful companion close beside her.

"Now come," she whispered, as she arose and wrapped her shawl about her, and tied a little hood over the golden head, which would remain beautiful and bright, notwithstanding all neglect.

They stole down the stairs, watchful and noiseless, and went forth into the cold, dark night.

In a luxurious apartment, surrounded by everything to render life happy, it would seem, was a man, apparently not over thirty-five years of age. Up and down the floor he paced, his steps sinking without sound into the velvet carpet. At length he stopped, sank into an arm-chair before an escritoire, unlocked a tiny drawer, and drew forth a miniature case. Holding it a moment unopened, he murmured:

"How memories crowd around me to-night! Why has fate dealt with me so cruelly? Everything dear taken from me—father, mother, brother, and, worse than all, *love*." Opening the case, he gazed tenderly on a fair, lovely face, with eyes as deep and blue as little Nell.'s, and hair as bright and sunny, too.

Ten years before, that beautiful girl was Edgar Austin's promised bride. Two brothers only represented an old and wealthy race—Edgar, the elder, and Charles.

Merry-hearted and fun-loving was this younger brother, who came from abroad, and sang, danced, and rode with Edgar's love, as sister and brother, they thought. But the time came when the heart of each was awakened to the truth. She was false to the one that worshipped her. He to the brother who trusted him with such perfect faith. Yes, Charles Austin won his brother's promised bride.

"Go! Let me never see you more! Take with you the half—nay, more, *all* you wish. Pave your way with gold if you choose. Only go, and quickly!" Edgar said, when the hope-crushing truth came to him.

Thus they parted, never to meet again.

Closing the case with a deep sigh, Edgar Austin again paced the floor.

"To-night they seem hovering around me. I believe I could forgive them now. Where are they? Oh! I am so

weary, so desolate! I must get out, or I shall go mad!" he cried. Touching a bell, he said to the man who came immediately:

"My coat and cap, Thomas."

"It snows, sir," the man said.

"I care not. I shall not be long. I must have a walk, or I shall not sleep to-night."

The snow was falling thick and fast. The streets almost deserted. It was impossible to see more than a few steps ahead. Yet Edgar Austin pushed forward.

Presently, a sound near arrested his steps; an instant more, and an immense dog was beside him. He drew back on the defensive; but the animal's manner was not threatening at all; on the contrary, friendly. Walking on up under a gas-light, Edgar Austin looked into the dog's eyes, and seeing the eager, pleading expression, asked, putting forth his hand, and patting his head:

"What is it, old fellow? What do you want?"

The noble animal was delighted that he had found a friend, and profuse in his thanks.

"All right," said Edgar. "I know. Now go ahead, and let me know what you want."

The dog ran forward a few yards, then back, to insure his friend's following. On again, and back. He continued in the same way until he had proceeded about two squares, when another sound was heard, which Edgar's companion answered immediately.

"Fido—oh, come, Fido!" called a child's voice.

In an instant more, Edgar was pulled gently up to a door, within the shelter of which crouched little Nell., shivering and terrified by Fido's long absence. She threw her arms around the dog's neck a moment, then raised her eyes pleadingly to the friend Fido had brought her, and said:

"Oh, please, sir, take me and Fido. We will be very good,

and work very hard, and not eat so much. Only just once; we are so hungry now—ain't we, Fido?"

Edgar caught the child's hand, drew her quickly up to the store window, from which the gas shone brightly, and asked:

"Where are you from, child? whom do you belong to?"

"From Mrs. Brown's. We don't belong to anybody but ourselves. We've run away. *Please* take us. Ain't it awful cold?" she said, hovering close to him, and looking up again into his face.

The next instant the little form was caught up, pressed close, and wrapped with the fur-lined cape. Calling to Fido, "come on!" Edgar hastened to retrace his steps. In fifteen minutes more he had reached his home.

When he had unwrapped his little burden, and placed her on the rug before the brightly-burning grate, she threw off the hood, which completely covered her head and partially hid the broad white brow, and turned to speak, when—

"Great Heaven!" Edgar Austin cried, "Ella Harland's miniature self!".

"Yes," nodding her pretty head, "yes, that was mamma's name," said Nell.

"Where is she?" Edgar asked, drawing her child closer to his heart.

"In Heaven," she answered, her lips quivering, and adding, "papa, too," she dropped her head on Edgar's breast and sobbed. "Mamma left us when we were across the ocean, and papa not long ago at Mrs. Brown's. May I stay with you, please? See, I'll give you this."

She drew from her bosom the little bag, and placed it in his hand, Fido expressing approval.

No further proof would have been necessary, but in the bag Edgar found the wedding-ring, marriage certificate, and a little locket containing the likeness of his brother and two locks of hair, one raven, the other sunny-hued.

"You look like papa, I think," Nell. said, "and Fido thinks so, too, I know. See how he licks your hand, and looks up into your eyes. May we stay?"

"Forever, my child. I am your father now."

A cry of great joy escaped the hearts of both Nell. and Fido. All the past was forgiven; and, in time, sweet little Nell. blotted from her uncle's mind and heart all memories but those loving and treasured. Mrs. Brown was sought and found. Through her he obtained all necessary information concerning Charles Austin. His body was placed in the family-vault, beside his parents. A few years more, and beside him lay the wife, for whose love he had forsaken home, friends and country. Next to Nell. Fido retains the affection of Edgar Austin, who declares that his (Fido's) nature is more noble than most men's; and, if he could only speak, his intelligence would surprise the world.

DAISY'S MASTER.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"BUY me, sir! Please buy me!" cried a childish voice, not sweet, but sharp and eager.

And Malcolm Graham felt his coat caught and held. He stopped and looked down. A little girl, possibly of six years, raised her great brown eyes, very sad and pleading in expression, and again cried:

"Please, O please buy me!"

"Buy *you*, child? Why, what on earth can you mean? Children are not bought and sold in these days in New Orleans, thank God!" Malcolm Graham said, taking the child by the hand, and asking:

"Where is your home? and what is your name?"

"Here, sir," pointing to a very elegant house, on the marble pavement of which they were standing. "My home *was* here; but not any more, they say. Oh, *will* you buy me, sir? Say Yes—do, *do!* Oh me!"

Glancing up to the door of the house, Malcolm observed for the first time a red flag. Immediately after, the auctioneer's bell was heard. Still holding the child's hand, he ascended the marble steps. Stopping a moment when he had reached the door, he asked again:

"What is your name? You have not told me."

"Daisy grandpa always called me. You are going to buy me, ain't you?" she said, tightening the clasp of her tiny hand, and looking very anxiously up into his eyes.

Malcolm Graham never made rash promises, but then, looking very intently into the child's eyes, he knew she needed comforting. Drawing her closer to him, he said:

"Yes, my little girl, if you are for sale, I will buy you. There now, don't be frightened any more. You are safe with me."

A perfect transformation took place, like magic, on the child's face. Her eyes were full of faith and peace, while a sweet, grateful smile parted her lips.

She said, "I know it," in such a quaint, old-fashioned way that Malcolm Graham laughed out. Directly after his fine face grew sad, as he said:

"I would give all I possess for that child's faith."

Looking at his watch, Malcolm found it rather early for the sale. Entering the hall, however, he saw several persons already in the parlors. He looked around in quest of any one from whom he could obtain some information.

Daisy, eagerly watching his every movement, understood just what he wanted, and drawing him out into the hall again, whispered:

"Come to Mammy Peggy; she knows."

Just at that moment a door at the end of the hall opened, and a pleasant-looking mulatto woman came out.

"Mammy, come here. Tell about me. Oh, Mammy, ain't he nice? So good! Don't you love him? I'm not afraid to be sold now!" Daisy exclaimed, clasping her little hands, and looking really joyous.

"Poor dear chile! Yes, sir, Judge Archer sot the world of store by her. He ought to have knowed how onsarten life is, and ought to have looked out for the chile's future good. Died all of a sudden, sir! Owed everybody, they wants to make out. And ef anything should be left, it will all go to Marse Eugene and his ma and sisters. Goin' to be a auction of everything to-day. And ef nobody wants to buy poor little

Daisy, why, to the orphans' 'sylum she's to be sent. So they tells her. I knows myself they is going to put her to some charity place, 'cause them folks all hates her, sure. Yes, sir. 'Dopted chile—none of their blood, and not one of 'em's going to take care of her—"

"Do you think, if I saw any of the family, and asked to take Daisy, they would consent?" Malcolm Graham asked, interrupting the woman.

"No use askin'. They don't care nothing about her, no way. They'd sell her sure enough, I believe, ef they could. She has been scared most to death about it. All the mornin' she's been settin' on the steps, and how it was you come to notice her, I don't know, sir."

From this woman, Malcolm Graham learned that Daisy's mother had been Judge Archer's first and only love. That the young maiden seemed contented with the husband her father had chosen for her; although he was old enough to be her father.

A few weeks previous to the time appointed for the marriage, a young artist was sent for to paint the beautiful girl's portrait. When sitting for him, she learned to love, and the day the judge was to have won his bride, she eloped with the artist.

It was long before her parents forgave her.

To Judge Archer it was a dreadful blow. But his noble nature soon rose above his sorrow. He sought and found the young couple, and succeeded in winning a reconciliation for them.

Sorrows soon crowded in upon the young wife. Father and mother passed from earth, to be followed by one and another little child, who, almost as soon as given, was recalled to its home among the angels.

One at last was spared—the little Daisy.

The artist laid aside his pallet and brushes, to buckle on

his sword, and offer himself to the cause of the South. When Daisy was about three years old, her father was among the slain of Petersburg. The weight of this last and greatest sorrow was more than her poor sad heart could bear, and Daisy's mother's spirit soon sought the many loved ones gone before.

Daisy she gave to the one she knew would love her as his very own.

Eugene Archer was the judge's only nephew, a youth of seventeen, then at school in Germany.

Judge Archer had "set his mind," as she said, on a union between Daisy and Eugene.

"Eugene has forgotten all about me, they say. And what does he care for a—I've forgot what they call me. What is it, Mammy?" Daisy asked. "Oh, yes, now I know—a pauper!"

"Hush-sh! Never mind. You must forget all about this now. I want *my* little girl to remember only happy hours and loving words," Malcolm said.

Then turning to the nurse, he asked:

"How soon can you get together what you think this little one ought to have? No matter about packing up everything. Enough for immediate use."

"Less than half an hour," she replied.

"Very well. Take care of her until I get a carriage. Don't let her be worried," Mr. Graham said, turning back and bending his face to receive the proffered kiss.

"No fear of that. They have all gone out to spend the day. And when they comes back it will only be to pack up and leave for good," Mammy answered.

At the end of the specified time, Daisy, with her little trunk, was waiting. Very soon after, Mr. Graham returned. Handing the woman a card, he said:

"Now, if any inquiry is made concerning Daisy's where-

abouts, give them this. And if they come, I will make some arrangement to keep her. How about yourself? Where are you going?" he asked.

"On the river. My son's stewart on the Magnolia. I only waited to see Daisy out of their way. But I'll come to see you, honey, before I goes. I knows though, sir, no one will care to find out any more than I'll tell them; that a gentleman came and took her off, and she's clean gone from their sight."

"Very well," Graham answered, hurrying off with his charge, as he saw how hard the little one was trying to restrain her emotion at parting with the only person who had been kind to her for many weeks.

Malcolm Graham's features expressed plainly his enjoyment of this episode in his life. Continually his lips parted with a pleasant smile, as he thought of his mother's immense surprise when he presented Daisy to her.

After about twenty minutes' drive, the carriage stopped before a very elegant brownstone mansion. Malcolm Graham led Daisy up the marble steps, and through the door, which was opened by a man-servant. In the hall they were met by a gentle-looking little lady, who, after looking wonderingly an instant, asked:

"Why, who have you here, Malcolm?"

"A daughter for you, mother, dear," Malcolm answered, smiling.

"There is only *one* way you can bring me a daughter, Malcolm. If you only would!" she said, softly.

He shook his head. Pushing Daisy gently toward his mother, he said, laughing:

"This is my little wife then—the *only* one I'm likely ever to have."

Then, in an earnest tone, he continued:

"Speak to her, mother. She is all alone in the world—

fatherless, motherless. You and I, mother, will fill her little heart with so much love, she shall have no room for even a sigh of regret for what she has lost; will we not?"

"Come, little daughter," Mrs. Graham said, in answer to her son's appeal. "If you are to be *my* child, we must begin loving each other right away."

Daisy sprang forward. Malcolm lifted her to kiss his mother, after which the little thing looked uneasy for a moment, and then said:

"I belonged to—to—" She hesitated, and stopped until Malcolm, laughing, said:

"Oh, I understand; you belong to me. Yes, that's so. Well?"

"If you will lend me to your mother, I would like to be her child," Daisy answered.

"All right. She is mine, you understand, mother, and I shall *loan* her to you. Now it is all fixed."

"What must I call him?" Daisy put her lips to Mrs. Graham's ear and whispered.

Mrs. Graham looked perplexed, answering in a low tone:

"I will tell you by-and-by."

Malcolm told his mother Daisy's story, and the good woman's heart was filled with sympathy. She determined to unite with her son in doing everything to make the little orphan forget her past sorrow.

Mrs. Graham was a widow; Malcolm her only son. Five years before, he had loved a beautiful girl. He won her promise to be his. A few weeks before the day appointed for their union she married a man very much older and very much better off in worldly goods than Malcolm; in a word, bartered herself for gold.

Less than a year after Malcolm was jilted by the false girl, an uncle, dying in Australia, left him a fortune more than double that of the man she married.

After Mrs. Graham knew all about Daisy, she told her that Malcolm was her guardian, and she could call him so, or, as that was a hard word for a little girl, she might say, "Guardy."

It was wonderful, the child's devotion to Malcolm. She studied to please him in every way, eagerly watching his countenance for approving looks.

From a box of keepsakes packed by Mammy, Daisy brought to show Mrs. Graham a locket marked, "From Papa," with the likeness of both parents, and some other articles belonging to her mother, from which they learned her name was Daisy Howard, and knew her parents were cultured and refined.

From the same box of treasures the little one brought letters from Eugene. She would beg Mrs. Graham, and sometimes Malcolm, to read them over and over again, saying:

"I'll make believe I have just got a letter; just play so, you know."

And when they humored her, and she had listened so earnestly to every word of which she really knew by heart, as she said, she would murmur, shaking her head:

"Yes, he has forgotten me. But he did love me, didn't he? And I—oh, I did love him too."

Years passed on until Daisy was thirteen, and never during all that time had any one disputed Malcolm's right to her. They had all been so happy. But the time came when they must separate.

Malcolm's health had failed very decidedly during the previous winter. His physicians insisted upon a change of climate, and advised the South of France. Mrs. Graham accompanied her son. Daisy grieved very much at parting with her guardian and her mamma, as Mrs. Graham had told her to call her, and think of her.

In a first-class boarding school Malcolm left his child, telling her she must study hard and be a very accomplished young lady against they came back. She would have to do

the honors of their home, which he intended to make very happy when he grew well and strong again.

So Daisy had little time to spend in worrying about her absent friends. She determined to do all her guardian could wish, to prove worthy of his kindness.

Almost every steamer brought her letters filled with love, from either Malcolm or Mrs. Graham.

Sometimes they brought very encouraging accounts of Malcolm's health; again his letters were less hopeful in tone.

He did not get well fast enough; but as the improvement, although very slow, was evident, their return was delayed again and again, until four years had passed.

Then a letter from Daisy certainly hastened Malcolm home. She wrote:

"DEAR GUARDY—When shall I see you? When *will* you and mamma come? I shall be the happiest girl in the world then. *All* I love will be near me. Just think, Guardy, Eugene is here. He has not forgotten or ceased to care for me. I wish you would come. I want Eugene to know you. Do you not wonder how he found me? It is just like a romance. He came with the brother of one of my friends to a musical soiree. After the performance was over, we were introduced. Neither knew the other until some one called me 'Daisy.' Then he repeated my name with such a surprised expression that made me know him. I was so delighted I believe I should have thrown my arms around his neck, as I used to; but just at that moment one of the girls stepped on my train, which circumstance made me sensible immediately of the fact that I was no longer an infant, in short dresses, and acting upon the timely suggestion, I greeted Eugene accordingly. I will not tell you more. Come home and like him, for my sake."

A month from that time Malcolm Graham and his mother waited in the reception room of Madam —— for Daisy's entrance. When she came, neither could restrain their expressions of surprise and pleasure at the change four years had made in their child.

Daisy was truly beautiful, and although grown to a graceful and accomplished young lady, to them she was the same artless, loving child. With words of joy and affection, she flitted from one to the other, caressing her mamma, and drawing Malcolm off to the window to see how much he had grown well and strong. She was so wild with delight, that Mrs. Graham told Malcolm he would have to cage his bird, or she would fly off from him.

An expression of pain passed over Malcolm's face. Daisy saw it, and was sobered directly.

"I am too happy in having a home nest, mamma, ever to wish to fly from it, unless you send me forth. I shall nestle close under your wing, you may be sure."

Malcolm thought of Eugene, and felt that *he* would win her from such thoughts.

Purposely he avoided this young man, disliking him—for what, Malcolm could scarcely define. It was not until some weeks after they were settled again at home, that they met. Then this feeling increased. Truly, Eugene Archer was not a person to win the respect of such a noble man as Daisy's guardian. He was decidedly a fast young man; but being very handsome, was also a great favorite in the fashionable circle of which Daisy soon became the belle.

Eugene was constantly in her train; but as there were several others just as devoted, and to all of whom she was equally kind, Malcolm was uncertain of the state of his child's heart. Every day she grew dearer to him.

"How can I give her up?" he often asked himself.

One after another came to him, entreating his help to win, and permission to woo her. But he said "Nay" to all, until Eugene came.

"Daisy, what about Mr. Archer? He says he loves you—that he believes he may win you, unless I object. Do you love him, my child?"

"I—don't know, Guardy. Yes, I think I like Eugene better than any of the others; and he says I belong to him rightly—that it was dear grandpa's wish—"

"And if it is *your* wish too, Daisy, then I shall have to give you up to him," Malcolm said, sadly.

"No, no, no! Don't, Guardy—don't give me up. I belong to *you*. I don't forget. I like Eugene, but I can't leave you."

They were interrupted by Mrs. Graham's entrance. Holding up an open letter, she said:

"Malcolm, Ada Hawley is in town. You must consent for me to have her here."

Ada Hawley was Mrs. Graham's especial favorite, and wished-for daughter in years long past. Now the hope returned. Ada was a widow, very beautiful still, and very charming in every way.

Malcolm consented to his mother's wish, and Mrs. Hawley became their guest. As host, of course Malcolm was attentive and kind. Very soon Madam Rumor drew her conclusion and ventilated it. Mrs. Graham grew very hopeful, confiding to Daisy the good news. To her great surprise, Daisy did not enter into her happy anticipations.

Daisy grew watchful and very miserable, when she saw that her guardian was very attentive to the beautiful widow.

Malcolm noticed a change in his child's looks and manner. Thinking she was sacrificing her own happiness in gratitude to him, he urged that she should recall Eugene.

For the first time Daisy was irritable and petulant.

"I know," she cried, "you don't care to keep *me*, since *she* came. I wish she *never* had come! Send her away, Guardy!" coaxingly then.

"I can't, Daisy. That would not be polite," Malcolm answered, smiling softly.

"Then let *us* go, you and me—"

She stopped suddenly, the blood crimsoning her brow and

cheeks. Malcolm Graham's heart gave a great bound of joy. With difficulty he restrained the impulse to clasp her to his heart, and, covering the blushing face with kisses, to call her his own. Very gently he drew her down beside him, and said:

"Daisy, my child, listen, and know well your heart ere you answer me. More than even my mother do I love you. The thought of losing you is worse than death to me. Yet can it be otherwise? You are so young. I more than twenty years older. Think of this, Daisy, and tell me: Can you give up Eugene, and be happy here with me? Would I not cloud your young life?"

"Let me stay, Guardy!" she answered low. Yet he could not believe such happiness was his.

"Daisy, stop, child! Can you understand? Do you know what hopes you are raising? Oh, tell me!"

"I know; I *love* you only, Guardy. I *like* other folks—Eugene and the rest. I want to stay with *you*."

"As my wife, Daisy?"

"Yes," she whispered, looking into his eyes, hers filled with faith and love.

Malcolm was satisfied, profoundly happy, more than recompensed for all the sorrow of the past. And so it was that Daisy kept her promise of never leaving the home-nest.

A FORTUNATE SLIP.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

IT was a bleak, cold morning in December, that two young men followed with the throng hastening along Broadway to their respective places of business.

"Hurry up, Al. Seems to me you are taking your time, and pretty quietly, too. What's stopped your tongue for once?" exclaimed one of the young men.

The other, putting his hand with a slight pressure on the arm of his companion, looked an instant into his eyes, then directed their gaze by his own to the figure of a woman just in front of them.

Slowly and cautiously she picked her way along the ice-coated pavement.

"Well?" said Al.'s companion in a low tone, inclining his head nearer to catch the answer.

"Do you not see she is lame? Dreadfully so. I cannot hurry by her." An expression of deep sympathy was in his eyes.

"Pooh! what have you to do with that? If you undertake to stand guard over all the cripples you may come across, you'll have a busy time of it," said the other, with a contemptuous curl of his lip.

"Hush! For shame, Louis!"

Just at that instant, as she was crossing the curbstones, the lame girl's crutch slipped, and she fell forward.

Albert sprang to her side, and raising her, asked anxiously: "Are you hurt?"

"Only slightly," she said, throwing up her veil and turning her face to answer him.

She was by no means beautiful. Only a thin, pale little face, on which the traces of suffering were plainly visible, was looking into Albert Foster's. Yet never before had any face impressed him as that. His whole nature was filled with sympathy. Turning to her, he said, in an earnest tone:

"You must permit me to accompany you. It is very slippery, and I see you are suffering now."

An impatient expression caught Albert's ear, and, turning, he saw his friend waiting near.

The pale face flushed painfully. She raised her eyes imploringly, and said:

"No, no—please go on. I shall do very well after a few moments' rest".

"Excuse me, I cannot leave you," Albert said, taking her hand and placing it within his arm in a manner very decided, but so gentle and respectful that the girl yielded simply saying:

"I have only a short distance now."

At the entrance of a large establishment, a short distance farther on, she stopped. Drawing her hand from his arm, she said:

"I am employed here. You have been very kind. Few would have—"

She hesitated, stopped, raised her eyes filled with tears to his, and with "thank you," in a trembling voice, she turned from him and entered the store.

A few steps farther on, Louis Hayden was waiting. As Albert came up, he said:

"I would not make a spectacle of myself by lugging along a dowdy little cripple, if I were you, Al."

"For shame, Louis! How can you talk so? Poor girl! I am truly glad I had the opportunity to assist her. I'm

afraid she heard your unkind remarks. I'm sure she did the exclamation at the time I offered my arm," said Albert, reproachfully.

"Well, if she did, I think she is used to hearing such. She don't expect to hear remarks about her grace and beauty, I guess."

"There, that will do. We will drop the subject, if you please," said Albert Foster, in a tone that expressed more fully than his words his disgust at his companion's cruel nature.

He remained quiet during the remainder of their walk, at the end of which, with a cold "good-morning," Albert entered his place of business.

"Poor girl! I fear she is more injured than she acknowledged. How weary her life must be! I could have knocked Hayden down for his brutal remarks. I feel now as if I had left a duty unperformed. 'Used to hearing such!' Yes, I fear there are too many like him. I wish I could shield her from the world's harshness," said Albert.

Continually during the forenoon his thoughts returned to the lame girl, with her large mournful eyes raised so imploringly to his. From his inmost heart he pitied her. His thoughts were still with her, when a boy came in, bringing flowers to sell. Albert purchased one of the bouquets, thinking:

"It is not probable any one else will send her flowers. I will. Possibly they will brighten her dreariness a little."

He had paid for them, and the boy was leaving, when Albert remembered the difficulty he might have in getting them to one whose name he knew not.

Stepping out, he called the boy back, and asked:

"Do you know any one employed at Hart's?"

"Yes, sir; I am going there now. I know the porter," answered the youth.

"Ah, that's good. You can get him to deliver this to the young lady who is lame?"

"Oh, yes; I know who you mean!" exclaimed the boy, interrupting him. "Miss Avis—I don't know her other name. Some call her Avie. I'll take it to her with pleasure. I know she don't have flowers often. She will be so glad to have them, to carry home to her sick mother."

"You seem to know considerable about her, Jack."

"Only what I've heard at the store. She takes care of her mother. They were rich once, they say," the youth answered. "Shall I take your card, or say by whom the bouquet is sent?" asked the boy, moving off.

"No, no; certainly not," answered Albert.

"All right, sir," Jack replied, and was soon out of sight.

"Avie!" softly repeating the name, Albert entered the establishment again.

"What an appropriate name! Poor little lame bird, constantly exposed to such cruel blows as Hayden gave her. I've done with him. Oh, if I were only rich, or not quite so poor, I would catch that little bird and keep her in the home-nest, where only words of love should reach her ear."

"Flowers for Avie," said a bright, pretty girl, coming into the work-room with the little bouquet, and handing it, with a pleasant smile.

"For me? I think there must be some mistake. Who would send *me* flowers?" said the gentle girl, raising her dark eyes with a pleased yet doubtful look, as if fearful to accept the sweet offering.

"Oh, no; there is no mistake. I heard the boy when he said, 'For Miss Avis.' And I'm just as glad as if they were for me. Here, put your little head down into the flowers, little girl, bird-like, and enjoy their perfume," said the bright girl.

Avie bent her head to hide the blush that came with the thought, "Who else could?"

She thought of him all day—of his gentle, earnest manner, as he drew her hand within his arm; his voice, so full of sympathy; his eyes, so clear and truthful when looking into hers, so flashing and indignant when the cruel words of his companion reached his ear. She thought of nothing but him. That evening, as she stepped from the building, supported by two of her young friends, she saw approaching the object of her thoughts. For an instant she raised her eyes to his. She knew then that her heart had directed her truly, and a glad, grateful look thanked and assured him of the knowledge.

Albert had not intended she should see him; he only thought of getting somewhere near, to see if the flowers had reached her.

Raising his hat, he passed on. His thoughts, however, followed the "poor little bird," as he called her. Many girls with brighter eyes and fairer faces passed him unnoticed that evening.

"Yes, he *pities* me. I know 'tis nothing else," Avis said, as she laid her weary little head on the pillow that night, not to sleep much, but to think of one whose name she knew not. Every word and look of his was recalled; and with a sob of anguish, the poor girl moaned:

"Oh, that I were like others. Surrounded with beautiful girls, how could any but thoughts of pity fill his mind for me? I must think of him no more. Love is not for me."

Frequently they met in passing. And again came a gift of flowers, sweet offering, bringing hope to the weary little heart.

"Perhaps—oh, dare I think it?—perhaps he may grow to love me," she said. A glad, hopeful light came in her eyes, but to linger only a few brief moments.

"No, no," she moaned. "No, I will not strive to win his noble heart. *His* wife must not be a burden upon his heart, as well as hands—a helpless cripple."

The warm blood rushed to her pale brow as she remembered the cruel words and sneering expression of Louis Hayden.

"No, no; I would never subject him to such mortification. I must fly from the temptation."

Albert met her no more after that. From the flower boy he learned that she had left Hart's.

Yes, the poor girl, fragile though she was, had a strong, noble heart; and putting aside the joy, she took the bitter part, believing it for his good.

Albert Foster made several efforts, without effect, to find Avis. That pale, patient face, with the great mournful eyes, had made a more lasting impression on his heart than any beautiful one ever had before.

Years passed, and though acknowledging the loveliness of many, he gave to none the place in his heart where the image of the little lame girl had been enshrined so long.

"Come, Foster, I declare it is full time you had yielded your heart to some fair lady. Every one of our club has his chosen one but you. There is Hayden; hardened as his heart was, it has yielded at last. But I cannot wish him success. She is too pure and lovely for such a man. Come, I wish you would let me introduce you to Miss Temple," said an old chum of Albert's.

"Miss Temple? Is she the lady that Hayden's heart has yielded to?" asked Albert, in a rather abstracted manner.

"Yes, Hayden's and a dozen others. Have you never seen or heard of her?"

"Never."

"No, of course not, you confirmed old bachelor. You never give a woman the chance of touching your heart, if you have one. Miss Temple is lovely in every way. Her uncle, whose heiress she will be, is very rich. They have just returned

from Paris, after a sojourn of five years. This young lady is one of the brightest stars in the fashionable firmament just now. You must really know her, Foster."

Albert, yielding to his friend's persuasion, accompanied him that evening, and was presented to Miss Temple. Louis Hayden was beside her when they entered the room, his eyes riveted on her fair face, his ear drinking in every sound of her low, sweet voice.

"You see how much in love Hayden is. Could you have believed it possible?" said Albert's friend.

But there came no intimation of Albert having heard one word his companion had spoken. After repeating them again, and meeting with the same result, he laid his hand on his arm, and said:

"What's the matter with you, man? I've been talking to you for five minutes, without your hearing one word, I believe."

"Oh, excuse me. I really have not."

"Well, I declare, I did not expect you would have lost your heart at *first* sight."

"No, no; 'tis not so. I've been trying to think where I've seen Miss Temple before."

"Here she comes! I don't believe she cares to have Hayden hanging about her. Let us approach and relieve her from his presence."

"Miss Temple, permit me to present my friend, Mr. Foster?"

A bright smile wreathed the ruby lips of the lovely girl, as, to Albert's great astonishment and delight, instead of the bow of acknowledgment the little hand was placed in his, and she said:

"I have met Mr. Foster before."

"Where, oh, tell me where?" he pleaded, an hour after, when, with her hand resting on his arm, they promenaded and

passed Louis Hayden, who sat, with frowning brow, gazing upon them.

"You must find out," she answered, smiling softly.

"Avie," called some one near.

"Avie," repeated Albert, turning quickly, and gazing with a startled, eager expression on her; and then, with a flushed brow, he said:

"Pardon me. That name is so rare a one, I was surprised to hear it again."

"Again?"

"Yes; years ago I knew another bearing it," Albert answered, with the old look of gentle pity in his fine eyes.

"Tell me of her?" Miss Temple said, softly.

"There is but little to tell. A gentle dove crossed my path; I would have sought to win and shield her from a careless, cruel world, but she flew from me—"

"Could she fly? Was she not a poor little crippled bird?" asked Miss Temple, in a tone so low that Albert had to bend his ear to catch the words.

"Yes, yes. You knew her? You have the same name. Can it be? No, no. You are a bird of bright and beautiful plumage, and—she—was—"

They were again close beside Louis Hayden.

"A dowdy little cripple, who fell on the ice on a cold, bleak morning, five years ago. Was it not as long, Mr. Hayden?" Miss Temple asked.

"Lost!" exclaimed Hayden, with a low moan, turning away.

"Tell me of her?" Albert said, in a low, agitated voice.

"Must I tell you of the gratitude that has never grown less in the heart of that little lame girl?"

"No, no. Tell me, where is she?"

"Here," she answered, smiling. "Waiting to be claimed as an old acquaintance."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Albert, gazing into the bright, lovely face, and on the slight, graceful figure beside him.

"Nothing is impossible in these days of science and wonderful skill," she said. "It was not difficult for my uncle, after finding me, to find also those willing and anxious to attempt a cure. You see the result," said Avis, placing her hand again within Albert's arm, and moving slowly toward where her uncle was standing.

"You know I love you. How madly! Must the remembrance of the idle words of a thoughtless boy condemn me to despair? Forget them. Trust me!" Louis Hayden pleaded.

"I cannot. Can you wonder that a wounded bird should fly from the one who dealt her a cruel blow?"

"Forgive!" he cried.

"I do—believe me. But—"

"You love another—Albert Foster. Ah! I might have known it," Louis said bitterly.

"I am his promised wife," she said, softly—and passed away from his side forever.

A WIFE'S TEST.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

THE hall-bell sounded in Clara Berringer's home, and the pale face of the little woman flushed slightly as she listened eagerly for the coming step. With a deep sigh the flush passed away, and she murmured sadly:

"I might have known it was not he."

A moment after the door of her room opened, and a voice asked:

"May I come in?"

"Why, certainly; I'm quite alone, and—"

"Any company is better than none, I suppose you were going to say," interrupted the visitor.

"No, I was about to say I felt quite lonesome, and was glad to see you," Clara answered, trying to look a little cheerful.

"Poor dear! I should think you would be lonesome. Almost every time I come I find you alone. I wonder you put up with this sort of doing. I heard Florence Dangerfield say Mr. Berringer was to be at the Pierces' to-night, so I thought I'd come over and stay with you. By-the-by, have you seen Florence since her return from Paris?"

"No—she has not called, and you know I so seldom am well enough to get out. But Fred told me she was looking very handsome."

Another sigh escaped the poor little heart, but the pale lips closed firmly, and smothered it lest it should tell the secret she was trying to hide.

"Handsome! I should think so. She never looked half so well in her girlhood. And I don't think she grieves much over her husband's loss. Well, you know folks *did* say that she only cared for his wealth. Don't you know I used to think that she liked Fred—I mean Mr. Berringer."

"Oh! Miss Spear, Florence and Fred were the best of friends always—nothing more, I assure you. Why, don't you know they knew each other from their baby days?" Clara answered, her face flushing brightly.

"Ah! well, maybe that accounts for their intimacy now. I declare it is wonderful how gentlemen take to these widows. We girls stand no chance at all."

Miss Spear owned up to twenty-five, and had been doing so for, at least, fifteen years.

"Florence was always very attractive. Are her children like her?"

"Yes, very. Perfectly lovely children. By-the-by, how fond Mr. Berringer is of children! I was perfectly surprised to see him make so much of Florence's. Gentlemen that have none of their own are not apt to. I wish *you* had children, Clara. They would be so much company during your husband's absence. Indeed, I think it positively *dreadful*. Mr. Berringer had better be home with you, poor, dear, delicate child, and not wasting his time with such folks as—"

The poor little childless wife could bear no more: her heart was almost bursting with agony.

"Stop! *Do* stop, Miss Spear!" she cried.

"Oh! my dear, I did not mean to hurt you. I did not know you took it so hard. I wouldn't mind it. I'd—"

"You mistake, Miss Spear. You hurt me by speaking thus of my husband. I certainly miss his society, but I cannot expect him to give up all social enjoyment, and remain home every evening with me. Besides, in Mr. Berringer's position, it is expected of him to mingle in fashionable society. Please

don't speak of him to others as you have to me," Clara said, in a gentle but decided tone.

"*Speak* of it! No, indeed, dear! It's none of my business. Only, I felt so sorry for you; and I thought you ought to have an idea of what's going on. And you are just the most patient little woman in the world, to take it as you do. Well, dear, we will change this painful subject. Have you heard of Mary Florence's engagement to Philip Carpenter?"

"No, indeed! Is it possible! Mr. Carpenter is such an admirer of beauty—I'm a little surprised. But Mary is a lovely girl; so gentle and truly good, and these qualities are better than beauty. I think she will make her husband very happy," Clara said.

"Oh, what an idea to imagine Philip Carpenter was won by such virtues! Have you forgotten the fortune left her by an uncle who died in Calcutta?"

"Yes; I had forgotten, or rather I never thought of *money* in connection with her engagement. And I do not for an instant imagine *that* had anything to do with it," Clara replied, warmly.

"Very well, dear, this is a free country. We are all at liberty, thank Heaven, to have our own opinion. But if I ever conclude to accept a suitor, I shall feel confident that it is myself he wants. That's *one* comfort a *poor* girl has," Miss Spear answered, tossing her head significantly, and glancing searchingly into Clara's eyes. An instant after, a look of satisfaction flitted quickly over the spinster's face.

Looking up at the little mantel-clock, she exclaimed:

"Bless me! nine o'clock! I must say good-by. If I were you I would just go to bed, and to sleep too. There is no telling when your husband will be able to get away from such great attractions."

A great sigh of relief escaped the poor little wife as the door closed after Miss Spear.

"Oh, I am so glad she has gone! I hope she will never come again. And I wish—oh, I wish I was in heaven! What have I to live for? If Fred ever loved me he has ceased to, now. Oh, can it be that he ever loved Florence! And perhaps he would have married her. But—no, no! How base I must be growing to let such a thought come for an instant to my mind! That dreadful woman made me have it. Still, I wish I had been as poor as Florence. I might have been happier now. Well, well, I shall not be in their way long. She is free, and he will be soon." And dropping her head on the sofa cushion, the poor little woman sobbed herself to sleep.

Miss Spear had gone her way, congratulating herself that "she had opened one woman's eyes," she knew.

"It just makes my blood boil to see a woman putting so much confidence in a man. The best one that ever was born is bad enough, and I'd just like to take one of them down a peg."

Miss Spear seemed to have a grudge against mankind in general, probably because no one in particular had ever tried to win her to a happier state of feeling.

"How I'd like to prove to Clara Berringer what I hinted to her this evening! I'm not the only one that's talking about his going on so. When I spoke of it to Miss Spicer she had enough to say, I guess; and when I just slightly alluded to it before the widow Ketchum, how *she* went on! And let me see. There was somebody else speaking of him. Oh, yes—Miss Ferret. She was talking about it to me. Well, now, I really forget *how* it began. But, maybe I might have *asked* her if she had heard of it. Yes; it is really the town talk; and I'll tell Clara that when I go again. Oh, he was only after her money. I know!"

And, with her mind fully intent on the subject, Miss Spear entered the boarding-house to declare she found Clara Berringer "quite broken-hearted at her husband's shameful neglect."

Five years before, Frederick Berringer had won his wife—a sweet, gentle girl, not remarkably beautiful, save to those who knew her best. Some evil tongues whispered then of golden attractions. But such an idea never entered Clara's mother's mind. She believed her child's loveliness sufficient to win the true affection of her lover, and so, in perfect confidence, gave her to him. Clara was naturally a frail little creature. A year after her marriage, the birth of a little girl, which almost as soon as given was taken back to her home with the angels, left the poor, childless young mother prostrate, with a low, nervous fever, from which she had scarcely rallied, when the sudden flight of her mother from earth was a shock so severe, that four years had failed to bring any reaction to the desponding spirit.

Finding his every effort to restore cheerfulness unavailing, her husband at length gave up in despair, and sought elsewhere for the pleasant home his home no longer afforded.

Although Clara missed very much her husband's society, she had never complained or even in her heart accused him of neglect, until after Miss Spear's visits. In vain had an earnest friend entreated Clara to throw off the spell that had gained possession of her, promising that health and happiness should crown her efforts.

"For your husband's sake, Clara. He truly loves you, dear. But believe me, you are trying his love very severely now," this true friend said.

With an almost contemptuous curl of the pale lips, Clara turned away.

An hour after she was receiving almost death-blows from the Spear. Although her heart was writhing with agony, she yielded a willing ear to the dreadful woman's words.

"*Everybody* knows all about it—and you have the sympathy of the whole town. Nobody will be surprised at anything that happens. Do you know where he is to-night?"

"He told me he was going to an oyster supper at the Commissioners'," Clara answered, with quivering lips.

"Yes, and *she* is there too—by appointment—I *know* it."

"Oh, Miss Spear, I cannot believe it. I cannot believe he is so false!" the poor wife sobbed.

"I'll prove it to you! if you will just come with me. Just see him with her, then you'll be convinced. How he stands over her when she sings! always by *her* side wherever they meet. Now, I'll tell you, just let John bring round your carriage, and come with me to the house. I have heard the housekeeper speak of this affair, and she will be glad to help you, poor dear. She will take us where we can see and hear without being seen."

It needed but a few well-directed thrusts, a little more persuasion, and Clara yielded.

Hidden behind the curtains of the bay window, Clara, with Miss Spear, waited the entrance of the company into the supper room.

Clara leant heavily against her companion as Fred entered the room with Florence on his arm.

They were a merry set. With wine and song and story-telling, they passed the hours away.

It was Fred's time for a song.

"What shall it be?" Fred asked, bending his head to catch Florence's answer.

"Would I Were a Boy Again."

When the last line was sung, and Fred had resumed his seat amid the warm applause of his audience, a voice called out:

"Now tell us what you would do if you *were* a boy again."

"Yes," returned another, "let each of us tell what he would do could he recall the past."

The merry voices were hushed a while; laughing faces grew earnest; women's eyes eagerly sought those they loved; and

wives' hearts waited—some trusting, some trembling—their lords' reply.

Flashing eyes, quivering lips, burning cheeks told that, perhaps, a thoughtless jest had mortified and wounded a loving, faithful heart. Few, very few, were the eyes that brightened, the spirits gladdened, as one after another answered in his turn.

Through the lace curtains peered an eye, wildly burning. The pale face of Clara Berringer really alarmed the housekeeper, as she drew near and passed her arm gently around the trembling form.

"Bear up, dear madam," she whispered, regretting then, as she gazed on the agonized features, that she had entered into Miss Spear's plan.

Frederick Berringer was going to answer then.

Scarce breathing, his wife stood pressing her thin hands over her heart, as if to stop its wild throbbing, and straining her ears to catch his every word.

Other eyes sought his. Other ears listened anxiously for his reply. There was no jesting in his mood. Earnest in look and tone, he spoke:

"If I could recall the past, it would only be to act it over just the same again; to share its joys and sorrows with the dear one I have chosen, and should choose again; and whom you, kind friends, had almost made me forget may even now be watching for her truant's return. And now, with your permission, I must keep her waiting no longer."

"*You* are all right, my boy," exclaimed his host.

Most of the women blessed him, and smiled their appreciation. All of the men honored him, and clasped his hand.

"Good-night, good-night," was exchanged between them, and Fred hastened away.

"Good-night! Oh, blessed night!" murmured Clara Berringer, as she opened her eyes an hour after to meet those of her husband, gazing lovingly, anxiously upon her.

With the great joy with which her husband's words filled her heart, she escaped Miss Spear's arms and darted to the hall-door to meet him, and fell fainting on his bosom.

Fred caught sight of the crest-fallen spinster as she stood only partially hidden, watching an opportunity to steal away. A glimpse of her somewhat explained Clara's presence. And after, when he would let her, Clara told her husband all, begging forgiveness that she had ever doubted him.

"Nay, darling, I should never have given you the chance, or, rather, that evil-disposed woman a chance, to work upon your poor little heart, as she did. But I'm glad of it. Her evil has proved our good," Fred answered, caressing her gently.

"Oh, if the venom from slander's tongue could oftener meet such a blessed, healing balm as your words brought me tonight there would not be so many miserable wives. Such women as Miss Spear, I fear, sunder many hearts that otherwise might never have learned to doubt," Clara said, a shiver passing over her as she thought of the dreadful woman's influence.

She was smiling softly, sweetly, a little while after, and Fred said:

"Now you are more like my dear little love of years ago. Those smiles are very dear to me. Are you going to wear them again, darling, and strive to grow strong and well again?"

"Indeed I am. With God's blessing, and your love, I know I shall," Clara answered, earnestly.

She kept her word, and became again a cheerful, healthy woman, blessing and making happy her husband's heart and home. A home that grew happier, a wife dearer, and more lovingly cherished for the children that gathered around and nestled close to the father's heart.

AUNT RACHEL'S RUSE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

DOWN went the knife and fork, back the chair, and Jacob Foster arose from the breakfast table exclaiming:

"This is more than the patience of a saint could stand! I shall either starve, or die of dyspepsia, if there is not some change effected. For a week I've not had one article cooked decently on the table. Coffee muddy, muffins that might answer in place of cannon balls, steak as hard and dry as mahogany, and—well, it is no use to talk any more. I must act. Rachel, pay this cook, send her off, and get another."

"Who, most likely, will be no better than her predecessor. We have had five within as many weeks. I tell you, brother, that first-class cooks will not come out of town, unless to a place offering more attractions than ours. It is a very dull and lonesome home, with two old folks, and those not of the happiest dispositions that might be found," answered Rachel Foster, an insinuating smile lingering for a moment on her pale, thin lips.

"Humph! Speak of yourself, if you please, Rachel. But it seems to me some of our servants manage to exist here. Peter, John, and Jane do not seem to me to be very miserable."

"No; the horses are company enough for Peter, while John and Jane I really believe are attached to us. Having been with us in happier times, they do not feel like deserting us in

our need," Rachel said, the smile having vanished then, a sad look settling in its place.

"Well, it was not always so. There have been times when I was proud to ask any one to my table," Jacob Foster said, with a sigh of regret.

"I know that. Your wife was an admirable housekeeper. After her death, how hard dear little Susie tried to have everything as mamma did, to please—"

"Rachel Foster! how dare you speak of her to me? Have I not commanded you—"

"Brother, I obey only the commands of Him who bade us 'forgive, as we hope to be forgiven.' Well, after your cruelty to your child, I tried to make you as comfortable as I could, superintending and helping to get up those dishes you were fond of and accustomed to, until my health became so feeble. Now, having no one to take my place, you will have to make the best of a bad state of affairs, or get some one to come to your relief."

"I *will* get relief. I'll advertise for a housekeeper—"

"You had better send and bring Susie home."

"Never! The ungrateful, disobedient girl! Never! I bade her choose between a stranger and me. She did, and so shall abide by her decision."

"Jacob, I should think six years might have softened your heart. Nay, you need not scowl, or try to stop my saying what I intend to. You drove your child from her home, closed your door and heart against her, and turned your back upon her. Suppose the world should follow your example, where would she turn to find protection? And what was her crime? What you considered all right in her mother, when, against all her friends' wishes, she remained true and clung to you. Jacob, forgive her, for her mother's sake. Think of your own youth and days of wooing. Think how your words closed your love's ears and heart against all threats or en-

treaties, and then forgive the child for only having her mother's nature. Send for Susie, Jacob."

"Never! once and forever!" And to prevent any further remonstrance or pleading, Jacob Foster left the room, slamming the door after him.

A sigh of disappointment escaped Rachel's lips. For a long time she had determined to plead once more with Jacob Foster for his child. That morning she had a good opportunity, and although she failed to produce any effect on her brother's heart, she had really surprised him by her daring and earnestness. Usually she was so quiet, bowing to his will; and of late, since her feebleness, she seemed to have sunk into an apathy from which nothing aroused her. What it was that had awakened her to new interest Jacob could not tell. Possibly it was caused by some news that Jane the housemaid had brought respecting the one they both loved so well.

Seated on the door-step of a neat cottage, in the suburbs of a large city, was a little girl. Eagerly she was watching for the coming of some one. Soon her blue eyes grew brighter, and clapping her hands with a cry of joy, she ran to meet the welcome one.

"A paper and letter for you, mamma. See! See!" the little one cried, holding high above her head what she thought a great prize.

With weary steps the little woman ascended and sank to a seat on the porch, dropping beside her a large bundle.

From the house came an elderly woman, who with a kind, gentle manner relieved her of the little black bonnet and wrapping, and handing them to the child said:

"Take mamma's bonnet and shawl and put them away. See how tired she is."

Then turning again to her friend, she said:

"Do open your letter. I hope it brings you some good news. I could hardly wait your coming to know."

With a sad look and shake of her head, which told how little hope she had of good news, the letter was opened and read in silence. Then passing it to the anxiously waiting one, the little widow said, with a sigh:

"I have long since ceased to hope for good news from home."

Then opening the paper, she turned to a marked paragraph, and read aloud:

"Wanted, a few miles in the country, a middle-aged woman as housekeeper. Must come well recommended, and be thoroughly acquainted with her duties. To such a person liberal wages will be given. Address J. F., Box 606, City P. O."

After a moment's silence, during which the elder woman seemed waiting some explanation, the other said:

"Some friend has sent me this. But how could I hope to obtain the position? Oh, if I only could!"

"Poor child! although I would grieve to lose you, still I wish you could. It would be so much easier than your toiling with your needle. But how can you? You are too young."

"I will answer the advertisement and try, at any rate."

Jacob Foster looked in perfect dismay at the pile of letters in answer to his advertisement.

How should he decide? Rachel's advice was sought; and after mature consideration, they both thought favorably of the application of one recommended by a physician of high standing, and the pastor of the church of which she was a member.

The housekeeper arrived at a time of great need. A few days previous, Jacob Foster was thrown from his horse, and very severely injured. Suffering terribly though he was, he could not be unconscious of the great change and improvement that had taken place in everything concerning his comfort. Fevered and fretful as he was, he could find nothing to complain of. The light in his room was just as he liked it; the air pure; the nourishment allowed always prepared in the

nicest manner, and administered just when he wanted it. It seemed as if he was living over those days when a wife's devotion made his heart and home so happy. One day, waking from a dream of Susie's mother, he saw, sitting beside his bed, gently moving to and fro, a fair, a fairy-like little girl. Forgetting for an instant the lapse of years, his own fancied wrongs and cruel resentment, he put forth his hand, and in a feeble voice, said:

"Susie! Good little Susie!"

The child looked at him with wondering eyes, and then said timidly:

"*My* name is Mary."

"Mary! Where did you come from, child?" the sick man asked.

"I'm the housekeeper's child, sir," the little one replied.

Jacob Foster had not been advised as to the child's coming, and for a moment he felt like declaring the little girl an incumbrance, to be gotten rid of. But another glance at the pretty little thing, so quiet and attentive, made him feel like keeping her near him.

So, before he was strong enough to get out of his room, little Mary had become very necessary to his comfort. Ever beside him, with little helping hand, cheering voice and amusing wiles, she entwined herself daily closer round his heart.

Often he would forget and call her "Susie." At such times, little Mary's mother would turn aside to wipe away the tear which came in pity for the Susie whose sad story she knew.

Jacob Foster considered himself the most fortunate man in having secured such a model housekeeper as Mrs. Mordaunt; yet many times he found himself wondering if such a bright, beautiful little fairy as Mary could be really the child of a woman so grim, grave and very plain looking. Now Jacob Foster had ever an eye to the beautiful, and if his housekeeper

had been a little younger and better looking, I think he would have been even better suited. The pleasant change in his household affairs produced a similar one in Jacob Foster's disposition. He grew so amiable that his sister Rachel, rejoicing in it, grew hopeful of obtaining his forgiveness for Susie, and determined to make another appeal for her.

So, a few days after, the kind-hearted Rachel placed in her brother's hand a letter from his child. Pleadingly Susie wrote to be allowed to come to him. She was alone with her little child, struggling for a living. Rachel watched him read the letter through, and then she entreated more earnestly than ever before for Susie. But in vain. No, she should not come. But he placed in Rachel's hands money to relieve her wants.

Soon after this, little Mary's bright eyes grew heavy; the rosy lips became parched with fever, and her sunny head drooped on Jacob Foster's shoulder. Mary was ill; and when the physician came and pronounced it an alarming disease, the hearts that she had made happy with her smiles grew awed and sad. Scarcely less anxious than the mother, Jacob Foster watched beside little Mary's couch.

Many times he heard her calling out for her "pretty mamma," and she would put up her little hands, and cry, "Bring back my pretty mamma, please!" He thought her wandering, crazed with fever. The day of great hope and terrible fear came.

"To-day," said the doctor, "will decide if we shall keep her."

After a long natural sleep, by which the mother, Rachel, and Jacob Foster watched, Mary opened her sweet eyes, and smiling, whispered:

"Grandpa!"

A frightened look came on the mother's and Rachel's face, but Jacob Foster neared the little form, and pressing his lips to hers, said, turning to the housekeeper:

"She has been dreaming of her grandfather, I suppose. She will live, I feel sure, to bless him with her love. Where is he? Would you not like to have him here?"

Before the housekeeper could reply, or raise her head from close beside her child, the little hands had caught hold, and clung with wonderful strength to the cap which entirely covered and concealed the housekeeper's hair.

In the attempt to retain the disguise, the spectacles were dropped, and in an instant Mary cried:

"*Now* I've got my pretty mamma!"

And there trembling before him, her head and shoulders covered by a mass of bright wavy tresses, her eyes, eager, anxious, and terrified, gazing into his, was no longer the housekeeper, but Susie, his child.

"Forgive! Oh, forgive me, father!" she cried, sinking beside him.

"Please have pretty mamma stay," whispered Mary.

"Forgive! forgive me!" again she pleaded, clinging to his hand.

The hardened heart was bending, the iron will breaking.

"Thank God!" escaped Rachel's lips, as she saw the father's eyes grow dim with tears.

Jacob Foster raised his child to his bosom, and holding her there, whispered:

"God has restored both my darlings to me."

"Forgiven!" she murmured, in joyous, grateful tones.

And the angels in heaven caught the cry, and returned it with one of additional joy and blessed promise:

"Forgiven—as your Heavenly Father shall forgive you."

Jacob Foster, in losing his housekeeper, felt not the least regret, for her place is more than filled by Susie. And ever since has her father blessed the day that he advertised for a housekeeper, and Rachel's *ruse* in securing for him the only one that could have made him so happy.

A VERY RASH VOW.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"DO you love her, Hugh?"

"More than my life, Will."

"Then, man, why don't you tell her so?"

"No, Will, I never will tell her so. Never, never, never," Hugh Walworth said, starting from his chair and pacing the room.

"Come, come, Hugh, don't give me a dramatic rehearsal now, but sit down here and tell me what the trouble is," said Will Laurence—Hugh's most intimate friend, and just the best-hearted fellow in the world. With almost womanly tenderness, he passed his arm around Hugh and drew him down beside him.

"No, Will; although I love Clare St. Clair, I shall *never* tell her so. Not even if, by so doing, I could win her. But that is not likely. I can hear now the ringing laugh that would greet my love-making, see the mocking curl of her proud lips. I was not far away when Gus Howard made a fool of himself."

"Gus Howard and you are very different persons, Hugh, and I think would meet a very different reception—"

"He is handsome, rich, and of one of the oldest and best families of our State, and—"

"A vain, conceited, brainless fop. I honor Miss St. Clair for the way she sent him forth. He would have understood no other reception."

"He is only one of the very many she has won by her witcheries to laugh at, and cast aside their hearts as little worthless baubles. She has no heart. She cannot have, or surely she would have given her love or sympathy, at least, to my cousin Paul—dear, murdered Paul—so true, so noble, so loving! He was worthy the purest woman's love. Will, my boy, standing over Paul's lifeless form, I swore I would *never* tell Clare of my love; I would fly from her; battle with and conquer this love. Ah, *then*, when my grief was above all other feeling, I thought it would not be hard. I must get away from here, Will; far away, where I shall never hear her name, and never see her. Six months have past since I stood beside Paul's coffin, and made that vow, and instead of banishing her from my heart, I love her! I love her!"

"Hugh! I have heard it whispered that Paul's death was not accidental; yet, *I* do not credit it. Why will you?"

"Why, because he wrote me of his love, and said: 'If I cannot win Clare, I shall have nothing to live for. I cannot, I *will* not, live without her.' I feel *sure* he went to her; told his love; was rejected; and in his agony—"

"*No, no, no!* Paul Heywood *never* intended that terrible crime, I know; and you know how fond he was of hunting. He went forth for that purpose, and it was by a sudden and unexpected discharge of his gun that he was killed. Now, do not charge Miss St. Clair with his death. She never trifled with Paul, I feel confident."

"Then, why did she exclaim: 'Oh, I might have saved him from this!' as she stood beside him? She dreamed not that I was near."

"I know not, Hugh. Be this as it may, I do not think you should feel thus toward Miss St. Clair. She is wonderfully beautiful; and men will love her. If she has not yet learned to love any of them, I cannot, for my life, see why *you*, of all men, should feel bad about it, *particularly*, so long as she does not refuse you."

"Would to Heaven I could think as you, Will! If I could believe that Clare had nothing to do with my cousin's sad end—well, I might be happier. But my oath is recorded on high, and—"

"There, never mind about that; but tell me, how long have you known Miss St. Clair?"

"Ever since she was twelve, and I a youth of fifteen. We were quite devoted to each other for about six weeks, while spending our vacation in the village of P——, she visiting her uncle; I mine. See, here is a little trinket she gave me then," Hugh said, taking from his pocket-book a little golden heart and holding it up. "And I teazed and worried auntie until she gave me from her chatelaine a little anchor. I gave it to Clare, and told her all my hopes were in her, and that as long as I kept her heart she must never give it to another. She said she would never want to. Oh, she was an earnest, true little love then."

"Well?"

"Well, we parted, I going back to college, she to school. I used to write to her through a cousin of hers, and she would answer—such dear, sweet little letters! Then, after a half dozen or so passed between us, she said she could write no more: that her mother said it would interfere with her studies, and she was too young to think of a lover.

"'But though I shall write no more, you may be sure I'm thinking of you—too much, I guess,' she wrote."

"There were beautiful girls all around me, nearer my own age. Soon I imagined myself desperately in love with the sister of my most intimate friend, and so little Clare was forgotten. I think this news must have reached her. When we met again—which was not for four years—she was a young lady of sixteen, very beautiful, and surrounded by admirers. She treated me with the most perfect indifference. I never could have believed four years could have changed any one as it did

Clare—once so candid, artless, and loving; then a heartless little coquette. I did not linger near her long. Again, after an absence of three years in Europe, I met her six months ago, just before Paul's death. Then it was I grew to love her. Oh, how I've watched her! Eager, famishing for one look, to tell even of a remembrance of the old times! But now this must soon end. I will cross the ocean again, never to return! Now you have my story, Will, and we will never speak of this again. Come, let us go out for a walk!"

"All right, Hugh. But I must express my opinion first on this subject, and then, if you wish, henceforth and forever, hold my tongue. If Clare St. Clair is a heartless coquette, I think you taught her the first lesson."

The friends took up their hats and sauntered down town. Hugh was very silent, only replying to Will's remarks in monosyllables.

"I've turned the current, I think, by giving him a glance at himself," Will said.

"Clare St. Clair, when will you be content with this cruel game you are playing? I've just seen poor Henry Carrington. I should think you have had a lesson severe enough in Paul's death. Do you wish another to die for love of you?"

"Cora, stop. How can you? How dare you say such dreadful words to me? Were you not my cousin, and dearest friend, I could not forgive it. Oh, girl, I wish I had a heart. Paul might have won it. Dear, noble Paul! I loved him as I should a brother, if I'd been blessed with one. But, Cora, Paul never told me that he loved me. I *never* refused him. Thank Heaven, he never asked. It would have been a deep sorrow for me to have lost his friendship. I have only one thing to reproach myself for. I might have kept him near me that day. He wanted me to go out riding. I feared he might speak the words I dreaded to hear, and so excused myself. Cora, you *must* believe me. Paul's flight from this world was accidental. I *know* it. He had promised to see me that evening."

And the beautiful, heartless, cruel girl, as her discarded lovers called her, dropped her head and wept bitterly.

"Forgive me, Clare. I *do* believe you. I wish others knew of this—Hugh Walworth particularly. Have you seen much of him lately?"

"No—yes. I have seen him often, but he only bows. He has never approached me—never spoken a word to me since Paul's death. I believe he hates me."

"Clare, I'm going to tell you a secret. Will Laurence—my Will now—we are engaged, dear," Cora said, with a beautiful blush mounting her fair face—"he told me that Hugh loved you—that his heart was breaking for that love—but that he had heard the story about Paul, and by his side had sworn never to tell you of his love."

Paler and paler the beautiful face grew. So still and cold she sat, that Cora in terror caught her in her warm, loving arms, and, caressing and chiding in turn, she managed to bring something like a life-glow to the soft cheek. And then the "beautiful coquette" sobbed:

"For this I've been waiting for years, and now to hear that it will never, never come! Oh, Cora, because I've been loving Hugh ever since I was a little girl I've had no heart for any one else."

"There, dear, don't grieve. It will surely end all right. Hugh was not himself when he made that rash vow. He must, he will, break it!" Cora said, soothingly.

"You do not know him. He never will," Clare said, sadly.

"We shall see," answered the gentle cousin.

And so she went away to find her Will, and with him set her wise little head to work to find some plan to secure the happiness of their friends. They parted to meet again the

next afternoon, when both would have had more time to work out a plan. But while these lovers were worrying their minds and hearts, Providence had taken care of the case.

Hugh, determined to fly from the girl he loved so dearly, had fixed upon the day of departure. Then an irresistible yearning came over him to see her once more. He started off toward her home, a beautiful country seat, two miles from W——. He thought, perhaps, he might meet her, or, hovering near, might watch her at the window on the porch, or wandering amid the trees and flowers. But he was doomed to disappointment. After lingering until near twilight, and failing to catch a glimpse of Clare, Hugh called a boy who was working in the garden and inquired if Miss St. Clair was home.

"No, sir. She went out for a drive. I hope she will be back soon, for the road is in an awful state. Them workmen cut it up dreadful this afternoon, and it is dangerous travelling now," the boy answered.

Hugh started off at a rapid gait, for what he scarcely knew himself. He had gone possibly a quarter of a mile, when he saw a light suspended in the road as a warning of a dangerous place. Almost directly after came the sound of a horse's hoofs. And then, as the little phaeton came in sight, he heard a sound of alarm from the horse. Another instant, and the terrified animal came flying madly on, on to the very danger whose warning signal had frightened him. A few seconds more, and it would be too late to save her.

Hugh sprang forward out into the centre of the road before the crazed steed. With all his strength he sprang forward, grasped its head, and succeeded in stopping for an instant its mad career.

"Stand back, for heaven's sake! He will kill you, Hugh!" cried Clare, as she sprang from her seat.

She was saved; and away, more furiously than ever, the horse flew, dashing Hugh to the ground with a violent blow.

"Saved! Thank God!" Clare heard him whisper, as, pale and bleeding, he lay lifeless before her.

Down on the ground beside him Clare sank, pillowing his head in her lap, and entreating him to open his eyes, to speak to her.

"Oh, I have caused this! To save me he will die. Hugh, dear Hugh, open your eyes! Speak to me! Listen to me!"

Slowly the eyelids raised, the pale lips tried in vain to speak.

"See, see, Hugh! Look! here is your anchor! I've worn it every hour since you gave it to me. Hugh, I never trifled with Paul. Oh, believe me, Hugh! Don't die! Try to live!" she cried.

And then, as his eyes closed again, and the head sank heavier in her arms, forgetting all, everything, but her love for him, she pressed her lips to those so pale and cold, crying:

"Oh, Hugh, my darling, you will never know how I have loved you so long! If you die, I shall die too!"

Again and again she pressed her lips to his. Surely the hand she had clasped gave back a gentle pressure.

"Yes, yes, he lives!" she cried. "I must get help. But how can I leave you?"

His eyes opened again, and with a pleading look were raised to hers. Voices reached her ear; footsteps were coming.

"Thank God! Help is near, Hugh. You will live. Try to for—"

She did not finish the sentence. She remembered then what Cora had told her.

"Yes, I *must* live now," he whispered, clasping closer her hand.

The frightened horse, with the remnant of the phaeton, carried quickly home the news.

Mr. St. Clair, with two of the men, started to hunt for Clare.

Hugh's injuries, although quite severe, proved to be not of a dangerous character. A week afterwards, he was able to be sitting on Mr. St. Clair's porch with Clare beside him.

"Mr. Walworth, in all probability you saved this reckless little girl's life; for, just the same thing over again, I fear," said Mr. St. Clair, coming up.

"No, sir. He saved my life because he wanted me for himself, and—and—"

"I am waiting your permission to call Clare mine, sir," Hugh said, clasping her hand, and approaching the old gentleman, who grasped Hugh's, and exclaimed:

"Have her? Yes; certainly you shall. I am delighted to get some one to take her off my hands. She is more than I can hold. The wildest, most reckless little piece. But the truest, most loving daughter that ever blessed a father's heart."

And so ended Hugh Walworth's resolve. I'm *not* sure that his oath was broken. But I'm quite confident that Clare St. Clair was perfectly satisfied of his love, although I can't remember ever having heard him *tell* her of it; and will have to admit she did *most* of the love-making herself. But *Clare Walworth* was told to her heart's content how much she was loved, and it is twice as welcome and so much sweeter coming from a husband's than a lover's lips.

FUN WITH THE POSTAL CARDS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"WHAT have you there, Kittie?" asked merry little Nellie Andrews, holding out her hand to receive the parcel held toward her.

"Oh, a lot of postal cards," Kittie answered, with a twinkle in her black eyes. "Guess for what."

"I know. You are on fun intent. I must hunt up a Latin, French, German, and Spanish dictionary, I suppose."

"Yes, Kittie, darling, presently. First, though, I want to tell you something. You know Charley Blain, and what exquisite teeth he has?"

"Yes, many folks declare he has a receipt from Doctor Le Blanc, for the payment of seventy-five dollars, for a set of teeth for *somebody*—"

"Oh, nonsense! I know his teeth the good Lord gave him. Well, last week he was absent from the office five days, with a bilious attack. Saturday when he came back, there, on his desk, he found a postal card. Of course, all the gentlemen just round had peeped at it, for they were nearly convulsed with laughter when Charley walked up to his desk and took up the card.

"Uncle says they just shouted right out when he laid it down and turned to look at them. Oh, with such a comical expression he read out:

"DEAR CHARLEY—Your teeth are not lost. John found them in the bath tub after the water was let off. The stupid

fellow forgot to mention it until just now. How sorry we are that you had to be kept a prisoner so long, and still more regret the great and unnecessary expense you had to incur.

"Yours, A. B."

"Oh, I declare that was too bad. His absence from the office made it all the more funny. It must have been from some one of the clerks."

"No, Kittie. Uncle says Charley thinks it either from Will Lawson, or his cousin Howard Marcy. So I'm just going to set those young gents' brains to puzzling. It would be of no use to send Howard a love missive, for he cares for his cousin Annie more than everybody else in the world. He would know well enough *she* would not send him one, and he would not care to find out about any one else. So what *will* we do?"

"I know Annie's folks are awfully opposed to her having him, only just because he is poor. Indeed he is a splendid fellow, and if Mr. Lawson thought there was any chance of his ever becoming rich he would like him well enough, I'm sure. Kitty, I will get a pen. Now how will this do?" Nellie asked a few moments after, passing a slip of paper to her friend, on which was written:

"HOWARD MARCY, ESQ.—We have been daily expecting to hear from you relative to the funds in our hands. We have now eighteen thousand dollars uninvested. Please let us know, by return mail, what disposition to make of it.

"Respectfully yours,

"ROADS & MEANS, Counsellors at Law."

"Oh, Nellie, if I was not fearful it might raise hopes in the poor fellow I would say it was just the thing. But don't you think it would be a pity?"

"Oh, I think he won't be likely to build much on it. Now I'll write a little verse of purer sentiment. You may send either you choose."

"No, I will send the one you have written to Howard. I've

an idea it will do no harm, and who knows but it may help him? I will tell you how—"

Just then a bevy of young girls came fluttering in. Kittie hid away the cards, slipping one, with the note she intended to copy on it, into her pocket.

That night the card was mailed to Howard Marcy, just about the time the poor fellow was sitting in his room, bluer than ever in his life. Mr. Lawson's manner toward him had grown very cold, indeed; he scarcely ever addressed him at all now. And Howard knew well enough why it was, and said:

"Just because I cannot help loving Annie he treats me thus. Who could live in the same house with her and not love her? Dear girl! Oh, if I was only rich! If I can only get over the coming two years, with God's blessing I do not fear the future. I know I can make my way. But what a struggle it will, it must be! How can I do it on fifty dollars a month? Board twenty-five now! And if Cousin Andrew continues to give me the cold shoulder, I must find some other home; and of course strangers will charge me higher—thirty dollars, likely. Then washing, four more, books and tuition, fifteen, and I have six dollars left for clothing, and possibly, in a few days, it will be reduced to just one. I cannot, with the respect due to myself, remain much longer, if things do not improve. I think Annie loves me a little more than girls are apt to love their cousins. I'm glad we are distantly related, or the old gentleman might add that for another objection. Indeed, if I had only the means to buy that exquisite little pearl ring, I would find out if she loves me as I hope. Oh, if just a slight streak of good fortune would come to me now, I think never could any man appreciate it so truly as I. Well, it is no use to sit up in this warm room, groaning over what is inevitable. I will go down, and be happy while I may."

Sweet Annie Lawson was sitting just where Howard Marcy expected to find her, on the shaded porch, looking very lovely, but a little sad, he thought. However, she managed to call up a smile to welcome Howard.

"What is it, Annie, that is troubling you?" he asked, seating himself beside her, and endeavoring to take her hand.

Annie drew it quickly away, at the same time glancing anxiously into the library window, where her father sat writing.

Howard understood the meaning of her glance, and the cause of her sadness.

"Will you come for a short walk, Annie?" he asked.

Poor girl! she could no longer disguise her sorrow. The tears filled her eyes as she whispered:

"I don't dare. I wish I might—"

Another look into the library window, another little sigh—almost a sob—and Howard felt that a crisis in his love-making was about approaching. Would it be life or death to him? What had he to hope for? Surely that evening was the gloomiest of his life. Miserable enough, he went back to his room.

"It is no use for me to struggle against fate. I wish now I had been content to stay home, with no higher thoughts than working the farm. No doubt I should have been happier far. Poor dear mother encouraged me on to this. She thinks I shall succeed, and 'make a famous lawyer,' she writes. Well, well, for her sake, I will struggle on."

Just then Howard saw Annie's father going down the street. Determining to have some understanding with Annie, he hurried down stairs to meet her in the hall.

"I was just coming to call you, Howard," she said.

"And I was coming to try and cast the shadow from your brow, Annie," Howard answered, holding out his hand.

She placed hers in it, saying:

"It would be too cruel to give you no explanation of my changed manner, Howard. Papa—well, you know, papa—thinks—"

Here Annie faltered and stopped, her face crimsoning as she turned it away to hide her confusion and tears.

"Yes, darling, I know. Your father thinks I love his child; and does Annie think so too?"

Gently he turned her face toward his, and looked earnestly into her beautiful eyes. "Tell me, Annie?"

"I know you do, Howard," she answered low.

"Yes, more than all the world, Annie."

"I know it, Howard, and I can't help being so glad of it."

"You darling girl! Now I shall not care how dark everything looks, for with Annie's love to bless and guide me, I shall be sure to succeed. You do love me, Annie?"

"I cannot help it. But I ought not to listen to you, or tell you that I do love you, because papa said such dreadful things—that I must not allow you to love me—that, that he never, never would listen for an instant to such a thing; he would just as soon see me dead. But here he is coming back. Oh, I'm so sorry, and so glad too! Mamma loves you. Maybe all will come right, we will hope and pray."

"God bless you, darling!" Howard said, as she hurried away.

About noon next day, to Annie Lawson's amazement, when her father came home to lunch, he said to Mrs. Lawson:

"You have not spoken to Howard about leaving, have you?"

"No, not yet. I hate so to do it, I wish you would reconsider it," Mrs. Lawson was saying, when her husband exclaimed:

"Reconsider it! I'm sure *I* don't wish the young man to leave. Can't imagine why *you* should. And now I think of it, I do not see why on earth you fixed him in that back room. The front chamber in the third story is far pleasanter. You

seem to forget, wife, that Howard is my relative—very distant, to be sure, but near enough to be entitled to some love and consideration. I've not been feeling well for a week past, or I should have looked more to his comfort. By-the-by, Annie, I think you treated Howard very strangely this morning. As our guest, if nothing more, you should be at least polite."

Annie's eyes, and her mother's, grew larger every moment, as they listened, yet scarcely believing their ears.

"What are you staring at, I would like to know?" Mr. Lawson snapped out, looking from his wife to Annie. "I do suppose, if my eyes had not been opened at last, before twenty-four hours you would have driven my cousin from the house!"

All the time, during his talking, he had been pulling over the papers, in first one pocket and then another until the contents of six were emptied on the table.

"Lost, as sure as fate," he said.

And when his wife and daughter started up to help in the search, inquiring if it was of much importance, Mr. Lawson answered:

"No—only a business notice. I suppose another will come."

The missing article was the veritable postal card sent by little Nellie the evening before. Meeting the letter-carrier, Mr. Lawson had received, with his own mail, the card directed to Howard. Instead of sending it immediately to him, Mr. Lawson retained it, to read over and over again, and speculate upon its meaning.

In vain the search ended.

"Perhaps it is just as well. If he had received it from me, he would have thought that it had something to do with my—ah, well, the change in my feelings. In a few days he will receive another from his agents, and in the meantime I will manage to let it come gradually."

An hour after, when Mr. Lawson was returning to his place of business, he met Howard. The day was very hot, and the

poor fellow was really suffering, dressed in his heavy winter clothing.

"I say, Howard," called Mr. Lawson, "you had better follow my example, and drop into Smith's, and let him put you into a cooler suit. I was in there two hours ago. Hey! not prepared just now? Oh, that makes no difference. Use my name, if necessary. I want to have everybody look and feel as cool as myself. Go right now, will you?"

Howard could scarcely speak his thanks for astonishment.

"What on earth has come over him? Well, really, I was just wondering how I should manage to raise a more suitable coat."

To Howard's greater astonishment still, when he entered Smith's, that little man came forward with more than usual courtesy, and when Howard made known his want—"Just a plain, cheap coat"—Smith laughed quietly, but pulled down a very nice and desirable suit, insisting on his trying the coat on. And then, when Howard put his hand in his pocket, only for the purpose of getting his pencil and memorandum book, to figure a little on it, and about when it was probable he might pay for it, Mr. Smith said quickly:

"Oh, no matter about the pay now—any time, six months hence, at your pleasure. We will always be glad to serve you."

"What has come over everybody, I'd like to know?" thought Howard. "I shall begin to wonder, like the old woman, 'if this be really I.'"

When Howard passed out of the store, Smith drew from his pocket the postal card, murmuring:

"It is lucky for me that Mr. Lawson dropped this. I've secured a very desirable customer. But who would have thought it? Well, this is of no further account. I'll destroy it."

And so saying, Smith proceeded to tear in small pieces the

card, and scatter its fragments to the winds. But its work was done.

Although Howard, the first day, almost doubted his own identity, he soon got accustomed to the wonderful change.

And how it really came about Howard could scarcely understand himself; but so it really was, that before the end of that week he was engaged to Annie, with the sanction of both parents. The dear girl thought her father had only come to his better senses, and appreciated Howard's worth, and so was very happy in the happy change.

There was something, however, to mar Howard's perfect bliss. How was he to get Annie's ring?

He had written to his mother such a happy, hopeful letter, immediately after winning Annie's promise to be his; for his previous letters had been very desponding, and "mother's heart must be relieved," he said. She, dear, thoughtful woman, began to think her darling ought to have a little extra money just then, particularly as the commencement was near at hand. He would surely need a new suit when he received his diploma. So she set to work to devise means to secure what she thought Howard must have, the result being the receipt of one hundred dollars in a letter from mother, in which she said:

"DEAR SON—I have been thinking you must need more money than you can make just now. So I sold Uncle Harry's gun. The money you need more than anything else. So don't worry about my disposing of it."

"I declare," exclaimed Howard, "this seems like a fairy's doing! I hardly wish for a thing before it comes."

So on Annie's finger was the prettiest little pearl ring, and Mr. Lawson chuckled to himself on the success of his wishes. When, a few days after, Smith was paid for the light suit, and received an order for another, he congratulated himself on his good luck. Neither he nor Mr. Lawson could keep their secret, each whispered it to his friend; and so it reached the

ear of a shrewd and well-known legal gentleman of W——, who, immediately after Howard graduated and won the prize for the best essay, astonished him by coming and offering him a partnership. Two months had only passed when Howard found himself just where he hoped to be, in two years. And better still, an old miser uncle, who never before would help him, when he heard of his nephew's success, concluded there was "something in the boy," and sent him a nice little present in the shape of a five thousand dollar bond.

A few days ago, Nellie's little friend, Kittie, came in and whispered, "I am going to be bridesmaid for Annie Lawson. She is to be married early in the fall." And then she added, laughing merrily:

"I truly believe this marriage will be the work of my postal card. I know only a few days before, Mr. Lawson did not treat Howard with common politeness. Just see how slight a thing may turn the current of our lives."

"We should be very cautious, then, how we drop these pebbles in the stream, Nellie. But I am glad, if our little piece of fun has done such good work. And I am confident Howard Marcy is worth all and more than Mr. Lawson believes he is. And we have only made him anticipate what the future is sure to bring."

MY AUNT'S WARNING.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"DO you intend to marry Paul Clinton, Maud?"

"Goodness, aunt Sophie! that's bringing a body up with a short turn, truly."

"Never mind that, child. I want you to answer me. *Are* you going to marry him?"

"He has not asked me, and so how can I answer?" Maud said, with a saucy curl of her cherry lips.

"When he does ask you, what will you say?"

"Can't say now; according to the way I feel then, you dear old inquisitive aunty."

"You know he loves you, Maud."

"Shouldn't wonder."

"Then, child, make up your mind to marry him, or let him know you won't before he grows to love you more."

"Why, aunty?"

"Because, Maud, he is just such a man as would be very likely to do something desperate if you trifled with him."

"Oh, indeed. I think I should rather like something of that kind—different, you know, from the humdrum, every-day courtship. Now, if Paul would half hang himself, or jump over the bridge, and be brought out with life enough to get well again, or give himself a little bit of a shot, provided he did not spoil his handsome face, I'd think he was really in earnest about loving me. O dear! I'm just dying for a little bit of romance. Mercy, aunty! don't look at me so strangely.

It's well I've got my full growth, or you would certainly have stopped that important process of nature."

"Maud Raymond, would you like to have a man's life lost here, and perhaps hereafter, to prove how much he loved you?"

"Good gracious, aunty! you *do* say the most dreadful things. What's the use of making one feel uncomfortable when it can be avoided? How would you have liked such a scarecrow to have been held up before your eyes when you were young?" Maud asked, half crying.

"Would to heaven I had been warned in any way!" said Aunt Sophie sadly.

"Why, aunty, did any man die—" Maud began thoughtlessly, when a gray shadow stole quickly over the sad face, and Aunt Sophie's hand was raised as if imploring her to stop.

"Oh, aunty, indeed, I did not mean to hurt you," said Maud, in a voice filled with regret.

"I know, child; I know you did not. I was just as thoughtless once, and folks said heartless. But no, no, I was not so. My life has proved it since. Sit down here, Maud, and let me tell you why I am so anxious that you should not encourage Paul unless you really feel you can return his love. Don't trifle with his heart, dear.

"In a village, not far distant, lived a maiden, merry and wild. She was a favorite with all the young folks, because always ready for a frolic, and never tired of fun. Among the boys who gathered round her was one older and graver than the rest, and the one she knew that loved her best.

"He brought her the first violets that bloomed in the spring, the sweetest little poems, gems of art and beauty. All his gifts were like the donor, better far than any other's. Yet proving by every action his love, he never spoke it.

"A time came when they were separated. Rose I will call

the maiden, because he called her so, was sent for by friends in town to visit them. Her parents deemed it advisable, and urged her going. Of course the gay girl needed not much coaxing. Those who wished her with them were wealthy and of high estate, and visions like stories of fairy-land filled the rustic maiden's mind.

"She felt a slight pang of regret when she thought of leaving Willie, but thoughts of lovers gay and great soon chased away regrets.

"'May I write to you, Rose?' he asked, as they stood in the moonlight at the garden gate.

"'Yes, if mother and father don't care,' she answered.

"'Will you answer my letters, Rose?'

"'If I have time,' she said, with a saucy smile.

"'Oh, Rose, how cruel you are!' he returned, in a tone so sad that she laughed, and said:

"'How serious you take everything! Of course I will answer.'

"'Rose, don't forget me. You will have many around you to fill your thoughts, I know; but come back to us, bringing your heart with you. Rosebud, will you promise this?'

"'Can't,' she said, with a toss of her curly head.

"'Promise, Rose. Oh, leave a morsel of comfort for your absence!' he pleaded.

"Her father was calling. With a hurried clasp of their hands she started off, darting back a step to whisper, with a voice half serious, half taunting:

"'Perhaps I'd better leave my heart at home, Willie. Some of the boys, may-be, would like to take care of it for me,' and was off again.

"He was at the depot next morning, but had no chance to speak the words of love Rose saw beaming in his eyes.

"The village belle soon became a fashionable young lady. Her friends were pleased with her, and called her beautiful.

Young men among the most eligible in the city admired her, and sought to win her love. She was pleased with many, but loved none. Regularly, during the months of her visit, there came to her the most beautiful bouquets of rare and choice flowers. In vain Rose and her relatives tried to find out who sent them. Laughingly the gay girl declared she was keeping her heart for her unknown friend.

"She was unexpectedly summoned home by the severe illness of her father. One young gentleman, more earnest in his attentions than the others, insisted upon accompanying her.

"Willie was waiting the arrival of the train in which she was expected. Before the cars had entered the depot, he sprang on them, and entered the one where Rose was seated. His handsome face was bright with smiles to welcome her home. Suddenly the light fled from his eyes, as they fell on Rose's companion.

"Yet calmly he returned her cordial greeting, saying:

"'I thought you would be very anxious, and came to bring you the favorable reports of your father's condition. He is much better this evening.'

"Rose intended to be very good and not tease Willie, but the old love of flirting was too strong to resist.

"She spoke softly and sweetly to the city beau, and feigned sadness when she parted from him.

"Willie saw this, and grew so grave that the gay girl relented a little, and brought back hope to his noble heart by ways she knew so well.

"'How kind in you to write to me so regularly, Willie. And such dear, good letters they were. I read them over and over. It was just like talking with you, when with them before me I wrote to you,' Rose said.

"Thus she kept him; sometimes happy in the belief she loved him; again despairing of ever winning her.

"At last, unable to bear the suspense longer, he entreated her to answer him.

"'Tell me, Rose, can I ever hope to win you? You know how truly I love you!'

"'So does somebody else, you know,' said the trifling girl.

"'And you—Oh! do you love him, Rose?' Willie asked, in a strange, low voice.

"'May-be; and I like you, Willie, too, just as well as if you were my own brother.'

"'No more? no differently?' he asked, his voice growing thicker and lower.

"'O dear! we have had enough of this; I don't want to talk about it any more,' Rose said, in a petulant voice, frightened a little at his strange tone and looks.

"Just then, looking up the road, to her great surprise she saw coming the young gentleman who had accompanied her home a few weeks previous.

"The Evil Spirit must have prompted her to say the words that drove him from her, and have, ever since that fatal day, filled her heart with ceaseless regrets.

"'Here comes my love!' were the idle words.

"'God forgive you, Rose,' Willie said; and leaving her side abruptly, crossed into the woods and out of sight.

"He came not that evening, and Rose felt a little worried, thinking she would write him a kind note, and make it all right in the morning. She went to sleep.

"A terrible storm came up at midnight; the rain flooding the surrounding country, and washing away the rustic bridges.

"Before noon the next day came inquiries of Willie. He was missing. From house to house the anxious friends hastened, to receive the same reply: 'Not here.'

"Rose's heart was filled with terrible misgivings. His strange look when he said, 'God forgive you,' was remembered with anguish.

The sun was just setting, when coming steps and subdued tones brought the miserable girl to the door, to behold Willie lying lifeless on the porch before her. 'Drowned,' they said. She only heard the dreadful word, and knew no more. Oh, would to heaven that I had never returned to consciousness! Oh, if my miserable life could have ended then!"

"Aunty, it was you!' Dear aunt, forgive my thoughtless words. Oh, how you have suffered!"

"Suffered, Maud! I have never known one day of peace since. 'Accidental,' they said it was. Oh, if I could only have that belief, to bring a morsel of comfort!"

"Dear aunt, why not?" Maud said, soothingly.

"That late hour should have found him at home. Yes, yes, I sent him from me to die! And I loved him, oh, I loved him, only him!" sobbed the miserable woman.

Tears filled Maud's eyes as she pressed her aunt's hand, and tried to soothe her.

"The truest, noblest heart that ever lived, and I broke it! Maud, oh, my darling, to you only have I ever told the truth. No one dreamed the true cause of my sorrow. They believed it only for my love I grieved. Oh, if that were all! If I could still the accusing cry constantly in my heart! Among his papers they found and brought me a receipt for the money paid for flowers delivered through those winter months when I was absent from him. This knowledge was another drop in my cup of bitterness."

"Aunty, you have suffered, I know, in telling me this—suffered that I might be saved. Rest easy. I will never grieve nor make you anxious again. I *do* love Paul, and when he asks me to be his, I will answer him candidly and truly, as a woman should," Maud said, kissing the sad, sweet face, the shadow on which she knew would never pass away until Aunt Sophie was in a land where regrets cease, and sorrows are no more.

BALM FOR THE HEART.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"IF you marry that girl, never let me see your face after," said Aunt Pamelia to her nephew, Harry Osborn.

"I *must*, aunt; I have won her love," said Harry.

"And consequently have lost mine. Never call me aunt again."

"Oh, you cannot mean this! You will not cast me from your heart!"

"I *do*, Harry Osborn. The hour you marry that girl I know you no more," answered Aunt Pamelia.

And she kept her promise. Twenty years had passed since then, and she had never seen, nor communicated in any way with the son of her adoption.

Ah! had he been her very own, had his baby head nestled ever close to her heart, his dimpled fingers caressed and smoothed her weary head, she could not have been so unrelenting. Remembrance of baby's kisses would have chased all angry thoughts away.

Aunt Pamelia was strong and healthy when she drove her boy from her heart and home, only because he could not love the one she chose for him, and would wed the poor little girl whose only wealth was her pure, true heart. The years that came after made sad changes in the unhappy woman. Some folks declared it was the wrath she cherished in her heart that wore her health and strength away. I've no doubt myself that it had a good deal to do with it. Had she been happier,

I'm sure she would have been healthier. In vain friends had tried to soften her heart.

In a great, handsome house she lived, with only servants about her.

Her physician advised her securing the attendance of some relative. To this she uttered a decided refusal, saying:

"I have had a trial of relatives. Find me a stranger, if you choose. I may secure attention and duty by paying for it."

So one day the good doctor brought to her a bright, happy-looking girl, and said:

"Here is a good little girl, and a wise one too. I will let you have her for a while. But when you get better I want her in my own home. We have only rough boys, and wife needs a gentle hand often. So this is the bargain, remember."

Aunt Pamelia raised no objection. She asked:

"What is your name, child?" in a stern, cold voice.

The happy look was chased from the girl's face. She hesitated, glancing appealingly at her friend, who answered:

"Rosa Bell;" and in a lower tone said, when leaving, "Cheer up, little girl; we will have her well and happy before long."

Like magic was the dreariness of the old house cast out. The blessed sunshine came in through the opened blinds, and laid siege to the very heart of Aunt Pamelia.

Wonderful was the change in Rosa's charge. The old hard look grew less and less, until it was lost entirely. The thin lips parted into smiles at the sound of Rosa's coming steps.

"She is a perfect sunbeam, doctor; the dearest little girl that ever I saw. How shall I ever pay you for bringing her to me?" said Aunt Pamelia.

"By not getting cross, now that I've come to take her from you," answered the doctor.

"Take Rosa away! Doctor, you will take my life away if

you do. Don't, don't! Take anything I have, but leave her!" pleaded the poor woman.

"I thought you were well enough to do without a nurse now."

"Yes, yes; but I must have some one to love. Pity my loneliness, doctor."

"Well, well, I suppose I must. But what does Rosa say?"

"Let me stay, doctor," answered the dear girl; and Aunt Pamelia's heart was relieved and made happy.

That night, in dreams, she lost her sunbeam. With a cry of sorrow she awoke.

"She has gone from me! Oh, where is she?"

A moment after, a soft, gentle hand was smoothing her brow, and answering:

"I am here, ma'am; indeed I will not go unless you wish me."

"My dear, good child! Yes, stay; don't leave me. Call me Aunty—won't you, little Rosa? I have no children—none to love me, unless you will."

"Indeed I *do* love you, Aunty. But may I say all I want to?" asked Rosa, in a tremulous tone.

"Yes, child; say all you wish. I know it will only be loving and kind," said Aunt Pamelia, patting the fair young face.

"There are those of kindred who love you, whose hearts yearn to win some little affection from the aunt who was a mother to their father. Let me plead for them, for him."

"Hush! I will not hear of them. They can never enter here, nor he return."

"You might have grown to love one of his children had she come as I."

"And I would have cast forth both the love and the one who had won it, when the knowledge of whom she was came to me."

With a sigh Rosa turned away. Aunt Pamelia said kindly:

"There, child, I suppose you felt it your duty to say what you have. Go to sleep, and be satisfied that you have done all you could; but don't attempt it ever again."

But no sleep came to Rosa's eyes that night. There was a great contest going on in her pure young heart.

At early dawn she stole out of the room, and soon after from the house. A little note was left with the old housekeeper, who, in answer to the bell, entered her mistress' room, and was asked:

"Where is Miss Rosa?"

"Gone."

"Gone! Where?" anxiously inquired Aunt Pamelia.

"Home, mistress."

"Home? *This* is her home."

"It *ought* to be, mistress, I knows; but you've sent her off. I heard what you said to her last night. Mistress, where your eyes been? The child's eyes are Marster Harry's; that's how she won your heart. She has the same blessed way. Even old Bill, blind though he is, knew her when she put her hand on his and spoke."

"What do you mean? No, no. Don't you dare to tell me."

"I must, mistress. She's Marster Harry's child. Let me go fetch her home."

"Never!" said Aunt Pamelia, closing her lips tightly. A moment more, and with a quivering motion they parted, and the miserable woman sobbed:

"Oh, why could she not have remained with me? I would never have known. It won't be long I shall need any one's love or care. Why not let me remain in ignorance?"

"She was too truthful. When she found out how you still felt, she would not keep what she gained by deception. Mistress, send for her to come home? You want her soft, tender hands about you."

"No, no. Go! Cease your grumbling; close the blinds and let me sleep."

"Yes, mistress; you will shut the sunshine out of the room and out of your heart, and you are sure to get ill again."

"Go, go!" cried Aunt Pamelia, closing her eyes and turning away.

She succeeded in driving the old housekeeper from the room, but it was impossible to banish from her mind thoughts of the sweet, gentle girl. How she missed the light step around her, the cheerful morning greeting, the blue eyes, loving and tender, gazing into hers, filling with tears when she was suffering; yes, eyes just like Harry's she had. Why had she not known them long ago? Aunt Pamelia wondered. Then her thoughts flew back to the time when the little orphan boy lay sobbing on the grass covering his mother's grave, beside which, just then, they had placed his father's form. How plainly the boy's look came back to her then, and his words, in answer to hers:

"Come, dear, let us go home, now!"

"Home! There's no more home now, when mamma and papa's gone."

"Yes, dear, I will make it home to you. I will be mamma—"

"Oh, but you can't love like mamma! Do you know how to treat boys? Nobody can't know but mammas," shaking his curly head and dropping it again, sobbing, on the green mound.

"I am your father's only sister, child, and will love you dearly," she said, raising him up and wiping his tears away.

"And when I'm naughty, will you keep mad only *two* minutes, and then make friends, like mamma?" he asked, his eyes gazing eagerly, yet doubtingly, into hers.

"I will be as near like mamma to you as possible, dear," she had said.

Strange that scene had not been remembered until then, since Harry was sent from her. Now, when it came, an accusing cry accompanied it. How had she kept that promise? Would Harry's mother have kept wrath burning

in her heart for a score and more of years? How memories crowded in on mind and heart then! Harry, defiant and firm, was forgotten; the coaxing, teasing, loving boy only remembered. "Make friends, Aunty Mamma," he used to say, and she could never resist him.

Soft smiles were playing over her face when the housekeeper came in with her breakfast.

"Hannah, how dark it is! Is it cloudy? I don't care for any breakfast. It is cold too, I think. Can't you fix my pillows better? brighten the fire do," Aunt Pamelia said, in a whining tone.

"It's not dark, the blinds are open. It's not cloudy *outdoors*. I tried to have your breakfast nice and hot. I've fixed the pillows the best *I* know how. And the fire 's piping hot," Hannah said, with a significant nod.

"Well, well. Nothing seems just right now. I'm not so well this morning. You must go for the doctor, Hannah."

An hour after, the good doctor was with her.

"Where is my little girl?" he asked.

"Gone!" she answered, and cried, "Oh, how could you deceive me so? You told me her name—"

"Only a part of it, madam. Her name is truly Rosabel. I brought you a stranger, as you told me—one that you could pay, likewise. Well, I did it for the best, and it would have proved so, perhaps, if you had let me take her away when I wished. But it is no use talking about it now. How are you to-day?"

"Miserable, doctor. What is the matter with me? Where is the trouble?" the suffering woman asked.

"In the heart, madam. But don't look so worried. I think I can find a cure. I have it not with me. I'll go now and prepare it. Take it immediately after receiving it, and I am confident you will soon get better."

"I will, indeed," answered Aunt Pamelia.

As she sat in her arm chair waiting the coming of the doc-

tor's prescription, she could fix her thoughts on nothing but Harry in his childhood days. His clear, ringing tone was sounding in her ear. Even the tiny clock caught the words, it seemed, and echoed them: "Make friends, aunty." At length the tone was no longer a child's, but deep, earnest, and manly; so clear and distinct that, with a startled cry, she raised her bowed head to see Harry bending over her. Rosa knelt at her feet, smiling through her tears. She said, catching her father's hand and closing it over her aunt's, "I've brought the doctor's prescription, aunty." As Harry caressed the trembling fingers, and repeated, "Make friends, aunty," Rosa stole out of the room.

Soon after the doctor's cheery voice was heard asking:

"May I come in?"

Harry's warm grasp welcomed him.

"How are you now, madam?"

"Better," Aunt Pamelia answered, smiling.

"Ah, yes; I knew that pill would cure you. It was a large one though, hey?" said the doctor, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Yes; but not bitter, doctor, and very easy to take. God bless you, my best friend, for bringing me the surest cure in the world!" said Aunt Pamelia, putting her hand fondly on Harry's shoulder. The other rested on Rosa's bright head.

"Yes, yes, there is nothing like letting in the sunshine, to chase away the clouds," said the doctor.

And Rosa whispered:

"Mamma and the little ones are coming to-morrow."

"Yes, there is plenty of room for all, in home and heart too. Doctor, love is a wonderful cure," Aunt Pamelia said.

Tears of joy were in her eyes, but were quickly crowded out by a smile, when the doctor, rubbing his hands with evident satisfaction over the success of his prescription, said:

"There is nothing like it for affections of the heart. I found that out by experience long ago, and have practised it ever since."

POOR GERTIE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"A HOLIDAY to-morrow! Oh, ain't you glad?" exclaimed a girl beautiful and bright looking, notwithstanding the long hours and close atmosphere of the sewing-room. She was such a happy little bird, with such a hopeful heart, that she would not grow pale and thin as most of the others.

"Say, ain't you glad? Why don't you clap your hands, and dance for joy? I believe I must," throwing her arms about one of her companions. She was about to suit her actions to her words, when a step was heard on the stairs.

"Oh, here comes Miss Crane," she whispered, and returned quickly to her work.

Miss Crane was the forewoman of the dressmaking department, in one of the largest establishments of P——. She had never been very popular with the girls, and lately they had all grown not only to dislike her very much, but really to dread her entry into the work-room. It was whispered that she had been trying to fascinate Mr. Osborn, the head of the firm, an old bachelor of about sixty. His marriage, a few months previous, to the widow of an old friend, ended all hope in that quarter.

This disappointment had not tended to improve her temper by any means.

However, for a few days previous to our story, the girls had to admit some change for the better in her mood. Then some

of them declared she was after Mr. Harry, Mr. Osborn's nephew. Indeed it looked rather like it, for somehow Miss Crane managed to have a great deal of business with Mr. Harry.

Although no longer very young, Miss Crane was still quite handsome; and as many a man of thirty had married women ten, fifteen and even twenty years older than themselves—she had read of men of fame doing just so—Miss Crane had hope, and really *did* look very sweet whenever she could manage some excuse to carry her to Mr. Harry.

"Do you think she heard Mr. Harry whisper to me in the hall?" the happy girl asked, putting her rosebud of a mouth close to her friend's ear, as Miss Crane passed by, going into another room.

"I am not sure, Gertie, but fear so. *I* did," answered her friend.

"I don't mind if you did hear. I should have told you. But I do hope that she did not."

"We shall soon know if she did. She will show her rage in some way."

A moment after Miss Crane entered.

"Six o'clock, young ladies," she said.

In ten minutes more the girls were ready to leave, every face brightened by the thought of rest on the morrow.

"Miss West, you will have to come here as usual in the morning. The dress you are at work on must be finished for the evening. I have an order to that effect," Miss Crane said, approaching the door, as Gertie was about going.

"Oh, no! Indeed I *can't* come. How can I? I—" she hesitated—"I have an engagement," Gertie said, looking imploringly at Miss Crane.

"Very well, Miss. Perhaps Mr. Osborn can find some one more willing, and more desirous of getting and retaining employment, to fill your place," returned Miss Crane coldly.

"Can I not take it home with me? I will finish it to-night," Gertie asked.

"No, Miss. You know that is against the rules of this department."

"Then I shall have to come," Gertie answered.

Her lips quivered, and she strove hard to keep back the tears, as she followed her friend down the steps.

When out on the sidewalk, Gertie's companion said:

"You know now that she did hear."

"Yes, of course. Oh, is it not too hard? Mr. Harry was going to take me out to see mother. I don't mind losing the ride so much, but it would have been such a happy surprise for her. You know I have not been home for four weeks. I cannot afford to go but once a month. And mother is so poorly too! Well, I will have to wait until Saturday evening, and go in the cars."

"Would it be too late to start at twelve, or say ten o'clock? I will help you on the dress, Gertie," her friend asked.

"Oh, yes. If we should start at ten, we should not get home before two o'clock, and it would not be worth while to stay only an hour or so. And Miss Crane would manage some way to stop my going, even if I could get the dress finished in an hour. I wonder how I will let Mr. Harry know? I cannot—I don't like to go in to tell him. Katy, you would not mind doing it for me? You always turn this corner. Go in the side door, and I will go on; so Miss Crane won't know any more than now. She is on the watch up at the window, I'm sure," said Gertie, looking up.

Sure enough, Miss Crane was there.

Katy promised to do as her friend wished, and so they parted.

The next morning, just as Gertie entered the establishment, the porter approached her, and was about to speak, when Miss Crane appeared. With a dexterous movement, unseen by her, the man passed on, and Gertie went up to the work-room.

A few moments after Miss Crane entered. Gertie's face flushed painfully as she turned aside, as if to conceal her embarrassment.

Instead of giving instructions concerning the trimming of the dress, Miss Crane was very busily engaged moving about and turning over the work, as if hunting for something. At length she grew apparently very much agitated, and turning to Gertie, she said:

"Miss West, last evening, just before our leaving, Mrs. Dalton's messenger handed me twenty dollars. I thought I put it in my pocket-book; but when going into the counting-room to make returns, a few moments ago, I missed it. I must have dropped it here somewhere; indeed I am perfectly certain of it. Will you look about, while I go out for a few moments? You will find it, no doubt. You know there has been no one here since we left, and as you were the first to enter this morning, of course it must be here now."

Again Gertie's face crimsoned, and as the door closed after Miss Crane, she said, with a frightened look:

"Oh, she must have seen James when he handed the note."

Ten minutes, and the door opened again.

"You have found it?" Miss Crane said, in a tone rather asserting than inquiring.

"No, indeed; and I have looked everywhere," Gertie said, looking very much worried.

"Miss West, it is useless for you to seek either to retain the money or deny its being in your possession," Miss Crane said, approaching Gertie, and looking as if she was about to lay hands on her.

"What?" cried Gertie. "You mean that I have found the money, and am keeping it?"

"Exactly so, Miss. And it is of no use to put on that astonished and injured look. I *know* you have it. I saw you conceal something in your bosom as I entered. Can you deny that, or explain your embarrassment at the time?" Miss Crane asked, with a triumphant air.

Gertie West's color fled. She grew very pale as she said:

"I know nothing about the money."

"Ah! you cannot deny it. I *knew* it!" Miss Crane cried. "Hand it to me, this instant!" approaching Gertie, and holding out her hand.

The girl drew back, paler than ever, only repeating again:

"I know nothing about the money."

"I will send for a detective, a policeman. I will have you arrested. Some one shall search you, if you do not give it to me," the excited woman said:

"I have not it, Miss Crane. Surely you will not bring such a dreadful charge against me!" the poor girl cried.

"Enough of this acting. If you do not give me the money immediately, I will go for advice to Mr. Osborn. Perhaps Mr. *Harry* Osborn would be more kindly disposed—a less impartial judge, hey?"

Again the pale face crimsoned. But she raised her eyes to those of her tormentor, and said:

"You will not believe me. I have nothing more to say."

"Then, Miss, I shall take the liberty to lock you in here until I return," Miss Crane said, walking out, and locking the door after her.

Gertie sank on a seat and burst into tears. What should she do? Ere she could collect her thoughts the door opened, and Miss Crane entered, followed by Mr. Osborn.

The old gentleman was really very much embarrassed. He had a good heart, and felt sorry always to know of any one's falling into sin. Gertie West was the last person he could imagine being dishonest. He did not know what to say to her, or how to accost her. He looked at Miss Crane, and she at him. At length, glancing pityingly at the trembling girl, he said:

"Well, Miss Crane!" feeling anything but well himself.

"I stated the case to you down stairs," Miss Crane answered.

"Oh!—Ah!—Well!—Really!" began Mr. Osborn.

It was difficult to tell which was the most agitated, Gertie or her employer. The poor girl had by a great effort managed to keep from weeping aloud. She dropped her head then, and all the suppressed emotion escaped in one great sob. This was too much for the kind-hearted man. He started forward, placed his hand on her golden head, and said:

"My dear child!—there, don't do so. We are all likely to err. The strongest of us may be tempted. I—I will endeavor to have this unhappy affair remain unknown outside this room. Give Miss Crane the money."

"Indeed I have not got it," sobbed forth the weeping girl.

"She has, sir," cried out Miss Crane, more angry than ever at the kind way Mr. Osborn dealt with Gertie. "I saw her myself when she put it in her bosom."

Mr. Osborn knew not what to say then. After walking to the window and pulling it down, although it was one of the warmest mornings in July, and taking out his handkerchief and wiping his face, he returned to Gertie. She was a little calmer, and raised her eyes to his.

"Can she be guilty, looking so sweet and innocent? I can't believe it," the kind man thought, but said:

"The only way we can retrieve a wrong action, my child, is first to acknowledge it. Then—"

"Mr. Osborn, perhaps I may never be able to prove my innocence, but I am not guilty. I have never even seen the money," Gertie was saying, when Miss Crane angrily asked:

"Do you pretend to deny my seeing you hiding it as I entered the room?"

"I can, and do."

"What is this then?" Miss Crane exclaimed; and darting up to Gertie, she snatched forth a closely folded paper, the corner of which had worked its way through an opening in her dress, which the poor girl, in her haste to hide the paper, had failed to button.

Impulsively Gertie sprang forward, and then stepped back, simply saying:

"It's not the money."

When she saw the paper unfolded, and a contemptuous smile on the woman's face, she said to Mr. Osborn:

"She has no right to read my letters. Make her hand it to me."

"Really!" Miss Crane said, with a mocking smile. "Mr. Osborn, this is something for your eyes, sir. Perhaps you will not relish the thought of a thief becoming your niece! This artful girl has entrapped Mr. Harry into a proposal of marriage. I insist that she shall be searched, sir."

Poor Gertie! She saw the look of displeasure plainly on the old gentleman's face. What could she do? what say? Nothing that she could have said would have gone so quickly to her employer's heart as the one word which escaped her lips in a wail of despair:

"Friendless!"

Mr. Osborn refolded the letter without looking at it, and handing it to Gertie, said:

"I am unwilling to condemn you, Miss West, on either of Miss Crane's charges. About the first there must be some mistake. I suppose it must have been my nephew's letter that you concealed on Miss Crane's entrance. Still, for your own sake, I should like this mystery solved."

"You can have me searched, sir; but Miss Crane shall not do it. She hates me, and is wicked enough to pretend she found it on my person, I do believe," Gertie cried. Then catching hold of Mr. Osborn's hand, she said:

"*You* are just. You will help me to prove my innocence, will you not? Have me searched; have the room searched. Oh,

we *must* find it! It will kill my mother if I am thought dishonest. I cannot have this dreadful suspicion on me!"

Before Mr. Osborn could reply, Miss Crane said scornfully:

"Having entrapped your nephew—"

Just then the door opened, and Harry Osborn entered, holding an open note in his hand.

Miss Crane's words had reached his ear. Looking from her excited face to Gertie's, tear-stained, and expressing so much agony, he was by her side in an instant.

"What is the trouble, sir?" he asked, looking toward his uncle.

"Miss Crane can inform you better than I," the old gentleman replied.

"I heard Miss Crane's remark as I entered. Excuse me, but I must deny the assertion. I have *not* been entrapped. I have been so fortunate as to avoid *your* snares," Harry Osborn said, in a tone more malicious than gentlemanly.

For the moment Miss Crane was completely silenced, while Gertie, taking courage from her lover's presence, said:

"Oh, Mr. Harry, she has accused me of something terrible. She has called me a—a—"

"Thief," Miss Crane said, her tone and look full of venom. "Yes, Mr. Harry Osborn, I say your promised bride cannot boast of an unspotted reputation after this. I accuse her of stealing a twenty-dollar note! Let her prove her innocence if she can."

A look of withering scorn Harry Osborn cast upon the woman, as, holding toward his uncle the open letter, he said:

"Here is the proof of Miss West's innocence. Mrs. Dalton's servant has just brought it, and it was for the purpose of returning to Miss Crane the lost money that I came up. You will see Mrs. Dalton says she found it in the sleeve of her dress; probably dropped by Miss Crane when folding it."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed old Mr. Osborn. "I am glad, very glad. Miss Crane, I'm sorry you have been so hasty."

It is impossible to describe Miss Crane's chagrin. But she would make another thrust at poor Gertie, and said:

"If Miss West had not looked so guilty when she hid your nephew's love-letter, I should not have thought of her having the money."

"The letter the answer to which I am so anxious to hear," said Mr. Harry, and added:

"Uncle, Miss West is not my promised wife. I only wish she had made me so happy. But my highest hope is to win her. Have I your good wishes for my success?"

Miss Crane was getting out of the room as fast as possible, but Mr. Osborn's reply reached her ear.

"Yes, yes; win her, if you can, and comfort the poor child the best you know how. She has passed through a terrible ordeal, truly. Ugh! that woman is very fierce."

He turned, and was going out of the door, when Gertie hastened after him. Catching his hand, she said:

"I want to thank you, sir. If you had not been so good to me, I could not have borne up through that dreadful scene."

Hesitating a moment, she continued:

"Tell me, do you not regret your nephew's loving me? Would you not rather it should be otherwise?"

Mr. Osborn looked into the pretty young face raised to his with such a gentle, pleading expression, and stooping, pressed his lips on her clear, broad brow, saying:

"You are a dear, good girl. No, I have no regrets about Harry or his love. I chose my own wife, and expect other men to do the same—to suit themselves. Now go and be happy. May God bless you, child! And I'm sure He will."

Harry Osborn would not let Gertie touch any work that day. He did not believe it was ordered for the evening, and did not care if it was. Gertie should have her holiday, he declared. And so the day which brought Gertie West the greatest trial of her life secured to her also the greatest blessing—the love of a good and noble man.

THE MERRY THOUGHT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"HERE is the wish-bone, girls; who wants it?" Aunt Kitty said, holding up the well-dried and polished bone.

Three merry voices answered, and three bright young faces looked eagerly into hers, pleading to be the favored one.

"I'll have to give it to the one nearest to me, my little Katie; and she is the nearest to marriage, too, I guess. Here now, pull with Mabel or Jeane, and see if I am right," Aunt Kitty said, as she patted her favorite niece's blushing face.

Katie took the bone, hesitated a moment, and then holding it toward Mabel, said:

"Jeane, *you* can afford to wait until next time, being the youngest. Pull, Mabel. Oh, don't take such a hold! Just by the very end. Now!"

The bone snapped, and Aunt Kitty cried out:

"That's all right—I knew it! Now, pet, put it over the hall door and wish."

"I know who she'll wish," cried out Mabel.

"And I know who will come under," sang out Jeane. "Of course then the all-important matter will be decided, I suppose. But if Katie's choice does not come under, how then?" she continued.

"The first unmarried man that comes under the wish-bone is to be her husband," answered Aunt Kitty gravely.

"What nonsense you are putting into these wild girls'

heads, Catherine," said their mother, who had stood unnoticed in the door for a few moments.

"You dun forgot, may-be, Missy, de times you and Miss Kitty dun dat very same way. But *I* 'members de time when you spected young Marse Harry Fielding would come underneaf de bone, and sted of him, comes sumbody you dun nebber see afore—de han'some cap'en off de vessel. What nonsense you call dat? Hey, honey? I know you didn't waste much time on poor Marse Harry after dat."

Mrs. Dale smiled kindly on the privileged old nurse, as she answered:

"Oh, Mammy, because it happened so once, that does not prove it any the less all nonsense."

"*Once!*" muttered Mammy. "I ain't so blind but I knows truff when I see it plain as de daylight, and I hopes to the bressed Lord nun but a good man may come underneaf Miss Katie's wist-bone, an' the one she wants to come."

"Come, Katie, make your wish, and up with the bone," said Mabel.

Katie sat still, looking from aunt to mother, as if doubtful what to do, with a very serious face, too. Jeane broke out into a rippling little laugh, and said:

"Now this is too funny. This bone has become anything other than 'the merry-thought.' Just look at Katie's face. Come on! Who cares what man comes under? I guess you need not marry him unless you choose."

Katie followed her sisters into the hall. Mounting the chair placed for her, she put the wish-bone over the door, jumped down laughing, and said:

"There are three we may confidently expect: Squire Ellwood, Dr. Farleigh, and Willie."

The last name was spoken soft and low, while a bright flush spread over the fair young face, telling her heart's story.

"But which of the three will come first remains to be seen," she continued.

"The old bachelor, the widower, or our own dear laddie," sang the merry Jeane.

The afternoon wore on, and Katie worked away on her embroidery; but an attentive observer could plainly see her ear was strained to catch every sound.

At length, when it grew too dark to see any longer, she put aside the frame, drew her chair close to the window, and watched the road.

A little while, and gentle Mabel drew near. Putting her arm lovingly around Katie, she whispered:

"John has just been here on his way from the mill. He says Willie has gone to town to-day, to buy some farming implements. So brighten up, my lady; he will surely call by on his return. There, listen! He is coming now, I think."

"No; that is some one coming from the village," Katie answered.

It was too dark to see the look of disappointment as she arose, saying:

"I must light the lamp; it may be some one coming here."

She had scarcely done it before the gate latch was heard, and a familiar step after. Mabel said:

"It is Squire Ellwood."

"Run quick! pull down the bone. Don't let him come under it," cried Kate.

Mabel flew to do her bidding. Too late. The door opened, and without any ceremony the Squire walked in, exclaiming, in a loud, genial voice:

"Why, bless me! I liked to have knocked down my little lady-love with my rough entry."

"'Tis not Katie; it's me, Mabel," she answered, in her confusion. How Mabel ever came to single Katie out as the one so expressed by the Squire, she could not tell herself—except his connection with the wish-bone then in her mind.

"Ha, ha, ha! what a wise little girl you are!" laughed the Squire, patting the blushing cheeks, and following Mabel into the sitting-room. Katie had escaped, and was not seen again until they all met in the supper room. She tried to throw off the feeling of gloom which had stolen upon her, with but poor effect.

That evening the Squire saw Katie in a different light from ever before. The quiet reserve made her appear more womanly.

Suddenly she had grown to him a dignified, charming woman, and his manner to her accorded with his thoughts. The familiar tone which he had formerly used when speaking to her was lost completely. Aunt Kitty quickly noticed all this, and her heart was filled with misgivings lest her darling's bright young life should be clouded.

The Squire did not stay long that evening. Scarcely had he gotten out of sight, when Katie heard another step, well known and well loved. Willie had come at last. Surely Katie would be like herself then, her sisters thought.

She did her very best to be merry; and occasionally, during the time of Willie's stay, she would break into a musical little laugh; but Willie noticed it was quickly followed by a sigh. Drawing her away to himself, he whispered:

"What is it, darling?"

In an instant her eyes were swimming in tears; and she shook her head, saying:

"You will laugh at me if I tell you."

"I may laugh away your tears, I trust, Katie, darling; but I'll promise not to laugh at you. Now tell me what troubles my own little girl?"

He drew it all out of her: the story of the bone, her wish, the old nurse's firm belief in the result, and Squire Ellwood being the first to come under it; and concluded by saying:

"Oh, Willie, why did you not come by as you went to town? Then you would have been the first."

"Why, Katie, I went early this morning. But never fear; if you will come, I'll take you away from a dozen squires, you dear, frightened little bird," Willie said.

He went away soon after. Katie accompanied him, with her sisters, as far as the garden gate, where the incidents of the afternoon and evening were talked and laughed over—Mabel giving a humorous account of her performance in the hall—until Katie was at last won from her gloom.

Willie Holden was the only son of an old and esteemed friend of Katie's mother, and their nearest neighbor. The young folks had grown up together, and the union of Katie and Willie was looked forward to by both mothers with confidence and great pleasure. Still there was no engagement—only a sort of quiet understanding between all parties.

Squire Ellwood was Captain Foster's "best friend," as the captain always said when referring to the Squire. Often this friend had come to the captain's relief in financial difficulties.

Many times Mrs. Foster had said to her daughter:

"There is no better man living than Squire Ellwood. But for him we might have been homeless. Pray God's blessing for him every day, my children; and love him as dearly as though he were your father's brother, for he has been as one to him."

The Squire was a man of abundant means, with no one nearer of kindred than a distant cousin to share it with. Some folks wondered that he had never married, and why he did not then. He was not too old by any means, only fifty-five, and handsome enough surely to please anybody. Others declared that he had been disappointed in his young days. A beautiful woman had jilted him, and he had no faith in any woman since.

The next day Squire Ellwood came early, and was closeted a long while with Captain Foster. After he had gone there was another long conference between the captain and his wife.

The girls knew nothing of this, as they were off to a picnic. But Aunt Kitty's mind was sorely exercised. At length, however, she concluded that her brother-in-law was financially uneasy again. Captain Foster was a very extravagant man, living far beyond his means, fond of all the good things of life, and, a few of his neighbors hinted, some of the bad things too. At any rate, he truly lived for the day only, taking no thought for the future, and consequently he often needed the Squire's help. There was a look of pain on Mrs. Foster's face that no one understood. At length it all came out. Squire Ellwood wanted to marry Katie! Aunt Kitty scolded and threatened, coaxed and cried, but all to no effect. Katie's father favored his friend's suit.

Poor Katie! it was a dreadful shock to her at first. She declared it would break her heart, and she knew she would die if she had to marry any other than Willie.

Katie dearly loved her handsome father, and ever before his word had been her law; but then she felt as if she must rebel.

"If I only should suffer," she said, "I would not mind it so much. But how can I ever hurt Willie so dreadfully?"

Then Captain Foster took her with him into his sanctum, where they remained all the forenoon; after which the poor child came forth very pale, but calm and decided. She would marry the Squire!

The news flew quickly enough to the next farm. Willie laughed at it. But when the same announcement came again and again, he declared, unless from Katie's lips, he would not believe it.

So he went to her, she declaring it must be the last time they should meet, and he vowing he would take her from the Spuire, if at the very altar.

"You are mine, Katie, and I cannot give you up. Why will you wreck the happiness of both? I know you are suffering, and I—"

"Willie," she said quickly, "stop. Say no more. This matter is decided. My own feelings were not considered when I agreed to—" Her voice quivered. She could not speak those words to Willie. "I chose between you and my father which I should make—miserable. That was it. I could not bear to think of you so. I dared not decide against him. 'Willie is young, and can bear it better, and in time another will comfort him,' I said. And so it must be. Now go, Willie, far away for a while, until we shall both feel better. Good-bye!"

He sprang forward to catch her to his heart, but she fled from him and escaped to the next room, sending her mother to soothe him as best she could.

Preparations for the wedding were hastened, that they might sail for Europe before the stormy season. Squire Ellwood was a very devoted suitor, yet so considerate and delicate in his wooing, that Katie had not the feeling of repugnance to her elderly lover that might have been feared.

Three days before the one fixed for the marriage, Katie and her aunt stood on the balcony watching the vessel that bore Willie away from his native land. As the poor girl turned to go in, Aunt Kitty saw the trembling lip, and putting her arm about her, she said:

"Oh, my darling, this is too cruel! They are breaking your heart, I know."

"No, no, aunty. This has hurt me badly, but 'tis not forever. If I had made my father miserable, I should feel it in years to come. I cannot just understand how it is that I am not more troubled, except that I am guided, and comforted, too, by a higher power," Katie answered.

The wedding-day dawned brightly. Katie stood at the window watching the sun rise, and thinking how many, many times it would go down ere she should return to her home.

A knock on the door recalled her. She opened it to her mother, who handed her a letter. It was from Squire Ellwood. She knew the handwriting, and opened it without comment. It was dated the night before, and read:

"My Darling—Ever since, in baby tones, you lisped my name, I have loved you; yet the idea of ever winning you for my own has been of very recent birth. How I ever conceived it I have wondered. You so young and fair, just beginning life; I world-worn, very weary at times, and so near life's close, would seem no proper mates. Yet you have made me very happy. I feel that in your heart there is a germ of love for me, which I know will grow greater; I feared otherwise, but was impelled to gain you, if possible. To-morrow is so near; yet to-night a feeling, not of sadness or gloom, but rather of warning, has stolen over me, and seems to promise no morrow for me.

"There is a strange feeling about my heart; perhaps the fullness of joy is too great. God bless you, my Katie! In life or death I will prove to you how dear you are, and how grateful I am that you have given me good hope for future happiness.

"Yours,

"E. Ellwood."

Katie raised her eyes from the letter inquiringly to her mother, and then noticed for the first time how pale she was.

"What is the matter, mother? Are you ill?" she asked anxiously.

"Katie, my child, that letter—what said it? I thought perhaps it might prepare you—"

"Ill? Is he ill? Oh, yes, it has. We must go to him—"

"He is dead, my child."

Yes, the good man had passed from earth.

They found him kneeling. In prayer his spirit had passed away.

They mourned him sincerely; none more than Katie. Not as the lost lover she thought of him, but the friend so true, whose every thought and deed had been for her happiness.

With the exception of a few small legacies and charitable donations, all of Squire Ellwood's large fortune was Katie's.

Poor Willie, in a far off land, was grieving over Katie's loss. Nearly a year had passed before the news reached him, and almost as long after ere he returned to find Katie more lovely than ever. His wooing was not of a protracted nature, you may be sure. Again Aunt Kitty was busy preparing her darling's trousseau, no tears then dimming her eyes or staining the pretty garments.

Years have passed, and now fair daughters gather around Katie's table. Sometimes the wish-bone is dried, and put over the door. While the merry girls are waiting and watching for the coming of some one, their mother's heart goes back to the time when her young life was clouded by the near fulfilment of Aunt Kitty's prophecy, and a prayer ascends to Heaven for the peace and future happiness of her children.

THE BUD AND THE BLOSSOM.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"He is no boy, to be beguiled
By sparks of golden fire;
I will not dream a pretty child
Can mar a life's desire:
In scenes of gayety and praise
She will regain her bloom,
And cease to waste her youthful days
In solitude and gloom."

THEY stood together, the bud and the blossom! Never were more beautiful women than Lillian St. Clair and the "Little Lilly," as she was called. No one would have dreamed them mother and child, yet so they were.

Their great resemblance caused them frequently to be taken for sisters, and well they might, for at thirty-eight the beautiful mother looked very few years older than her daughter.

They were arrayed for an evening party, given by Mrs. St. Clair's brother to Lilly, just sixteen that night. It was impossible to decide which was the more beautiful: Lillian, robed in a rich white silk, the ample folds falling gracefully around her queenly form; her dark brown hair, struggling to curl, was rolled in a wavy coil and confined by a pearl comb; the same jewels adorned her neck and arms; or little Lilly, dressed in white too, but of gossamer texture, which was caught up with sprays of lilies and jasmine; a wreath of the same on her head, and drooped amidst her curls, that fell soft and shimmering to her waist.

"Come, come, mamma; we will be late," said Lilly, her

bright face glowing with excitement, and bright anticipations of her first ball.

The mother's face grew sad, and a sigh escaped her lips, as she gazed on the happy child. Her thoughts flew swiftly back to her own youth, when she too was free from all care, merry and hopeful. "How much she is like I was then, when Paul saw me last! Should he meet Lilly, he might almost forget the lapse of time, and think her his Lillian. *His* that might, that *should* have been," she said to herself, as she allowed the maid to fold the wrapping closely around her, and followed the impatient little Lilly into the carriage. "Heaven shield her from such a fate as mine!" murmured the mother, as, a half-hour after, she heard the admiring exclamations that greeted Lilly's appearance. "Nay, that cannot be for her. Her heart's affection cannot be bartered for gold. She has enough of that. The price of my blighted hopes has given it to her."

In her early girlhood, while still at school, Lillian had met, loved, and engaged herself to one of the college students, Paul Erving. School-days over, Lillian returned home; and soon Paul followed, and presented himself to Mr. Foster, Lillian's father, who immediately gave him to understand that he would never favor or consent to Paul's union with his child—that he had other views for her.

And so Lillian was bade to dismiss the handsome Paul, and welcome her father's friend, Morton St. Clair, a man old enough to be her grandfather, as her future husband. Lillian protested against it; and meeting clandestinely her lover, vowed to be true to him. And so Paul went away to travel, confident in her constancy. But it was the old story. Her father was dreadfully embarrassed, and Lillian could and must save him by her marriage. Scarcely six months had passed, after parting from his love, when Paul read the announcement of her marriage. They had never met since.

Lillian knew nothing of him. For two years she had been a widow. During that time many had sought her love, but none received encouragement; for the beautiful widow, although she knew not that he still lived, watched and waited for the coming of her girlhood's love.

Little Lilly, wearied with much dancing, was resting in the conservatory, and awaiting the return of her partner who had gone in quest of an ice. Glancing up, she saw, standing quite near, gazing earnestly on her, the handsomest man, she thought, she had ever seen. Not one of the fashionable gallants that thronged her uncle's rooms, but a noble-looking man, grave and earnest, who immediately inspired Lilly with esteem and confidence; and before he had spoken one word to her, she felt as if she had known him long and well.

"Is it possible I find you thus unchanged, Lilly? I almost forget the years that have passed, the wrong and sorrow with them, when I see you looking just as the last time we met," said the stranger, in a low, sweet voice, holding out his hands to clasp hers.

Lilly was surprised and bewildered by the familiar address, but she placed her hands in his; and just then Lilly's uncle entered, and said:

"Ah! so you have found our little one, Paul. Is she not wonderfully like her mother? You might almost forget time, and think Lillian before you. Come, she is waiting to see you!"

And then Lilly and Paul Erving both knew that the bud had been mistaken for the blossom; but there was no explanation then. The return of the gentleman with the ice concluded the little scene, and as Paul Erving followed his friend, he said:

"I shall see you again soon, Miss St. Clair." And added in a low tone, "We have both some explanations to offer, I think."

Lilly returned with her partner to the dancing-saloon, but there was no longer any enjoyment for her there. Her mind was filled with thoughts of the handsome stranger. She watched eagerly the entrance for his return. The pretty, flattering speeches that reached her ear from the many admirers that gathered around were no longer pleasant; in fact, quite annoying. She wanted again to hear those deeply sweet tones that she had heard only for a moment, yet would be remembered forever, she thought. Yes, little Lilly was very much pleased with Paul Erving, her mother's first love, but Lilly knew nothing of his former relation to her parent, and was wishing then that Paul would return to her. As the time passed on and he came not, she began to grow jealous of her mother, and would much sooner have been away by herself, to recall his looks and words, than to be surrounded by a set of fops, as she then thought the young men near her.

A little while longer, which seemed an age to Lilly, and she saw him advancing. With the familiarity of an old friend he came forward, took her hand, placed it within his arm, and led her off for a promenade; and then he told her of his being a very old friend of her mother's, and how much she was like the Lillian he knew twenty years before, and concluded by asking, "And you—did you not mistake me for some one else?"

"No, I have never seen any one like you," she answered.

"But you smiled, and welcomed me as if a friend," he said.

"I did, I knew not why," she answered; and then, looking up into his eyes with the truthfulness and candor of a child not yet taught the duplicity of the world, said, "Can any one help doing so?"

Paul Erving was pleased with the beautiful girl's confidence, and she was never so happy as when leaning on his arm and listening to the wonderful things he told her of his travels.

But the time for parting came, and when Paul Erving placed Lilly and her mother in their carriage, he said:

"I shall call to-morrow."

There was but little conversation on their way home, for both mother and child were thinking of Paul. Lilly dreamed of him, of course, and watched eagerly for his coming the next day.

And when every day or evening found him with them, the beautiful mother grew more beautiful, and seemed very happy; while her child, her merry-hearted, laughing Lilly, became so pale and quiet.

Lillian saw the change in her child, yet never dreamed the cause. The thought of her merry little Lilly loving Paul, a grave, quiet man, old enough for her father, never entered her mind. Very uneasy about her, Lillian forgot her own joy, and earnestly watched for the cause of the change. Then, like a flash of lightning, the knowledge came to Lillian, so sudden that she almost sank beneath it. Both loved Paul; one must suffer. And he—might he not have learned to love the beautiful young girl? As yet he had not spoken of love to *her*. Were the past weeks of happiness only a passing dream? Must she return again to the old life of weary loneliness?

Lilly's happiness must be secured, if possible. How should she act, to accomplish that?

While the mother was pondering over what to do, Lilly had decided. She knew well how dear Paul Erving was to her mother, and from her uncle she had heard how they were separated in their youth. While near the object of her love, she could not resist seeing him whenever the opportunity offered, and every hour spent with him served to make Lilly love him the more. So she would go away even though Paul loved *her*, which she sometimes thought he did, and leave her mother to win the love *she* was willing to resign to secure happiness for her. Ah, Lilly, you may yet know a love you would not resign to any one.

Lilly pleaded to be allowed to visit some cousins in a distant city. Again hope and peace entered the mother's heart. She might be mistaken, for surely Lilly would not be anxious to leave, if she loved Paul. So little Lilly, with a sad heart, went among her relatives, a set of as merry girls as were ever found. Every day brought some new engagement of pleasure, every evening a party or concert, so Lilly had no chance to indulge in gloomy reveries.

Weeks grew into months before Lillian welcomed her child home again. In the mean time Paul had again sought her hand. But she could not answer him until Lilly came back.

Earnestly, eagerly she looked into her child's eyes, to read, if possible, her heart. Lilly saw the anxious inquiring gaze, and knew well of what her mother was thinking; so, clasping her arms lovingly around her, she asked:

"Mamma, when are you going to give me the right to love Mr. Erving as much as I choose?"

For a moment Lillian's heart almost ceased to pulsate, and in a trembling voice she asked:

"Lilly, do you love Paul Erving?"

"Indeed I do, mamma; almost as much as I do you. And I wish you would give me the right to call him papa."

With a silent prayer of thankfulness Lillian pressed her child to her heart, and then there was perfect confidence between them: and Lilly said:

"Now, mamma, you will give him his answer, and we will all be happy again."

"Tell me, Lilly, what taught you the mistake you had made with regard to your affection for Paul?"

"Mamma, I have been trying to tell you;" and then, hiding her face on her mother's bosom, she whispered, "Another love, mamma, so different; one I can never resign, except with life. My thoughts are all of him; night or day, I'm always dreaming of him."

"Why, Lilly, my child, who is he that has taught you to love thus?"

"Oh! mamma, you will think it so strange, I scarcely can tell. I have never spoken one word to him, and cannot say I know his name. I will tell you all about it. He is a young officer. My cousins and I very frequently visited the dress parades at the 'Point.' There I saw him. There was something about him which reminded me of Mr. Erving; but he is very young—about twenty, I think. Mamma, I believe I began to love him right away. I could have found out his name, but I would not inquire; I was fearful the girls would suspect me. Often I saw him, and soon noticed that he watched for my coming, and a smile of recognition and satisfaction would always greet me. Yet he never sought an introduction. We had met this way for about three weeks, and then he was ordered suddenly off. The day he left I received an exquisite bouquet. The girls puzzled their brains to find from whom it came. My heart told me directly, and I stole with it to my room, hunted among the sweet flowers, sweeter still for the dear little note I found hidden there. You can read it, mamma."

And Lilly took from her bosom the treasured little messenger, and her mother read:

"I am suddenly ordered off. I could no longer resist, and have sought an introduction. I should have been with you to-night. Fate is against me. If I live, I shall find and tell you what you must suspect. Your sweet smile will cheer many a weary hour, and be a talisman to guard me from evil. I will come worthy to look into your pure eyes, and speak my dearest hope. "Faithfully,

"E. E."

There had been a look of doubt and uneasiness on Lillian's face as her child revealed her love, but after she had read the note it wore away, and she said:

"I think he is a good man, Lilly; I like his note."

"And you will like *him*, mamma. I am so happy! I *know* he will return, and I know all will be well."

"And you know not his name, my child?"

"No, mamma. I suppose he thought I did, as I could, so he only signed his initials."

Lillian was again promised to Paul. A few days previous to their wedding, he said:

"Lillian, I wish to bring to-night a young friend, and present him to you; and if Lilly has no objection, I think we will have him attend her the day you will make me happy."

Lillian smiled approval, and Lilly said she could tell better after seeing the young gentleman.

They were sitting waiting the coming of Paul and his friend. Lilly was whiling away the time at the piano. A little stir caused Lillian to look and see her lover, standing in the door. Answering his gesture, she followed him into the library, and was scarce seated when she heard a cry of surprise and joy from Lilly.

Seated beside her, clasping her hand, Paul Erving told Lillian that a few months after the news of her marriage, he had yielded to the persuasion of his mother, and wedded a distant cousin, a frail little creature, who only lived long enough to place in his arms their boy, for whose birth her young life was paid—that he had delayed telling her this at first; why, he knew not. Afterward a letter from his son, received while Lilly was visiting her friends, determined him to wait, and give them a surprise that he hoped would be an agreeable one; and Paul concluded by saying:

"He is with her now, renewing his acquaintance. They have met before."

"Do you mean to say—" and Lillian hesitated.

"Yes, Lillian; that my boy is as desperately in love with your child as his father was with her mother twenty years ago."

Leading her back to the drawing-room, he presented his son, Lieut. Erving.

And Lilly, her young face glowing with love and happiness, exclaimed:

"Is it not strange, mamma? Not that you and I should have similar tastes," she added archly, "but that, after a great tangling up of our life-thread, it should all come out so smoothly; and, I trust, will wind so until the end shall come," she said, an expression of sweet thoughtfulness and gravity stealing over her features.

"Yes, love, and I think you may add, without any twist."

Turning to Paul, Lillian noticed a shade of reproach in his eye, and she whispered:

"Viewing our children's happiness, can you for one moment regret the past?"

A few days more, after Edward Erving had saluted his new mother, she promised him in another year Lilly should be his. And when time winged his flight, and brought to the young lovers the day that made them happy, Lillian blessed her children and said:

"Deeply, to-night, I feel that 'all things are for the best, and are wisely ordered.' How hard may be the path! how long! how dark the sky, I know too well! but the end will come; the light will at last shine forth, revealing the blessed truth. The love I sacrificed on the altar of filial duty, to secure peace and comfort to my aged parents, was not lost; it has been given back tenfold."

DISGUISED.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

Oh, thou invisible spirit of wine!
If thou hast no name to be known by,
Let us call thee—devil!—SHAKESPEARE.

"HARRY DUNCAN is coming home next week, Dora, and his uncle thinks we must show him some little attention in the way of a dinner-party, or something of the kind. He has graduated with great honor, and my husband feels quite proud of him. By the way, Dora, I used to think Harry and you were very fond of each other, and likely to make a match of it some day. But lately there seems to have been some difference between you. When he was home last summer I noticed it particularly. What is the trouble?"

"No particular trouble, auntie; but there is an obstacle in the way, which, unless Harry removes, we shall never be any nearer in relation than now. I will be candid with you, and relieve your mind. Harry is very fond of wine."

"Why, Dora, I am astonished that a girl of your sense should be so foolish as to make that an obstacle between Harry and your union. His father, the Squire, always did, and does still, take his wine, and there never was a better man, or one more respected; and, Miss, there is *my* husband, who has been a father to you, he is fond of his wine. Anything to *his* disadvantage?" said the old lady, warming up considerably. "Neither is it to Harry's. You never saw him

intoxicated. He has always been just as used to seeing wine on his father's table as tea. And now the idea of a child like you setting your will against a harmless life-long custom!"

"Auntie, listen a moment, please. With uncle, and Harry's father, the use of wine has been of no disadvantage, I admit; but they have been living all their days in this small town, where they have not been so exposed to temptation as Harry is in a large city. Another thing—they are of a very different nature; both being calm, thoughtful, and matter-of-fact. Harry is excitable, impulsive, and very fond of gay company, and that is why I fear the use of wine for him. I have never seen him really intoxicated, but I have several times last winter, when we were in town together, seen him very much exhilarated. With my very limited knowledge, dear aunt, I have seen many young men of bright promise, with everything contributing to their advancement, and to a brilliant and honorable future, sink to obscurity, or worse, disgrace, from that one harmless custom—as you view it—indulging in the wine cup. Now let us talk of something more pleasing, and which we will be more likely to agree upon—this party to Harry. Please do not make it a dinner-party. Let us have something new to these good folks—something for them to talk about years to come. Do, aunty, make it a masquerade!"

"A masquerade! Why, child, I hardly think it would be a success. These good people have scarcely heard of such a thing"—this was twenty years ago, dear reader—"and would not understand anything about it."

"Never you fear, aunty. We have two weeks for preparation, and will send out the invitations immediately. After they have been received, I will call on some of our friends and explain all about it, suggest characters, and so on. I will get Katy Didwell's assistance in these errands. And I have no doubt, long before the day for the party comes, everybody

will know everything necessary to insure success. So agree quickly, and let me start to work immediately."

The permission was given, and Dora hastened to obtain the assistance of her intimate friend Katy-Did, as she was called.

In a few days Harry Duncan arrived, and in due time presented himself to his uncle and aunt. Dora was out making preparation for the approaching party, but she soon returned, and greeted Harry kindly; but there was nothing in her manner to induce him to believe she had relented in her decision.

After a little while Aunt Duncan thought it better to leave the young folks alone, hoping Dora would be won from her obstinacy, as she thought it.

"Harry is handsomer than ever, and his manner is perfectly charming. She cannot resist him if he woos her now," said the old lady to herself. And pleading some domestic duty, she soon withdrew.

Harry hastened to improve the opportunity. Seating himself beside Dora, he said:

"Six months have passed, Dora, since I offered you my love, and you rejected it. I vowed then I would conquer my feeling, banish you from my heart and mind; but I cannot do it, strive as hard as I can. Dora, we were born for each other. I believe you love me a little, but not enough, or you would not let a *whim* separate us. Tell me you have relented, darling! Why, I would die to make you happy!—do anything and *everything* for you—"

"Except the only *one* thing I have ever asked of you—a very slight sacrifice for one who is willing to die for me," said Dora, a little sarcastically. And then, with great earnestness, she continued: "Your *love*, Harry, I did not reject; that is very dear to me, and I am truly glad you cannot banish me from your heart—I hope you never will; but I can never be your wife, Harry, until you give me the required pledge."

"Dora, you will let this obstinacy destroy both of our happiness. If it were necessary to insure your welfare, I would not hesitate. I *know* I am in no danger. If I yielded, it would seem as if I dared not trust myself. I am no boy. You should have more confidence in me," answered Harry, as he paced the floor in much excitement.

"It is necessary to both my peace and welfare. I would be in constant dread that you might be tempted to drink deeper and oftener of that dangerous glass. It is useless to prolong this conversation, I have so often pleaded with you in vain. I can only say now, Harry, that if you loved me as devotedly as you say, you would respect my fears, and give up this habit which you profess to care so little for. Whenever you will do this much for me, Harry, come, and you will find me waiting to welcome your return, and glad to compensate you with a life's devotion."

"If *you* had the confidence that you should have in me, you would not ask it. This is mere obstinacy. When you ever show me I am in *danger*, I will give you the pledge; not until. In a word, if you or anybody else, from this day, should ever see me in the least under the influence of a glass too much, I'll never touch wine again." And with this remark, Harry took up his hat and walked indignantly from Dora's presence.

The night of the party arrived. Every one was jealously guarding their secret of the character they were going to personate.

The many and original costumes did much credit to Dora's management. There was but one obstacle to mar the evening's pleasure. Harry's father, "the Squire," the great man and favorite of the town, was prevented from being present by a severe attack of rheumatism.

Many times during the evening Harry thought he had discovered Dora. On speaking once to a Sibyl who, passing him

as he was about placing a glass of wine to his lips, raised her finger, and whispered, "Beware!" he thought surely that was her, but soon he discovered his mistake. Again he claimed her in the character of a venerable Grandmother, who frequently, during the evening, would shake her head in a warning manner as he passed her. Here again he was mistaken. Giving it up, he determined to enjoy the evening as best he could, and began a desperate flirtation with a little Irish girl. Harry had, even at so early an hour, had wine enough to make him merry, and a little foolish too. Many were the silly, nonsensical speeches he made to Kathleen, and in his then very clouded brains he was unable to determine whether his companion was really an Irish girl, or a "make believe." Her brogue was perfect.

Frequently, during the hours he spent with Kathleen, he would glance around to see if any one likely to be Dora was near. His mind was clear enough about *one* thing. He did not wish *her* to see or hear him do or say anything that was ridiculous.

Harry, as Othello, looked finely, and mystified many.

The hour for supper arrived—the time when the curiosity, as well as the appetites of all would be satisfied. One after another of the masks were removed, revealing the hidden faces. Nearly all were discovered. But still Dora was not found. Harry, so intently watching for her, had quite forgotten his companion, the little Kathleen. Bethinking himself, he turned to speak to her, saying, "Come, my verdant darling, unmask, if you please, and bless me with the knowledge of whom you truly are."

The mask was removed, and Dora stood smiling beside him.

Harry was dumbfounded! How completely he had been deceived! And I am fearful that just then he did not feel very "piously inclined." Dora's ringing laugh was echoed by another from the venerable Grandma, who, removing her mask, revealed the merry Katy Didwell.

Harry was much mortified, and quite reckless too. Frequently he refilled his glass, not at all regarding the warning and appealing looks of Dora.

The hours wore on, and the guests were gradually departing. Aunt and Uncle Duncan had retired soon after supper, leaving Dora and Katy to do the honors. At length all were gone except one. Up in the dressing-room, not reclining gracefully, but stretched full length on the sofa, was Harry Duncan. Dora and Katy found him thus. Katy went up and caught him by the arm, exclaiming, "Get up, Harry, and go home if you are going. Every one has gone but you!"

Harry opened his eyes, tried to rise, and finally sank down again.

"Oh, Dora, is he—"

"Yes," answered Dora, cutting Katy short in her question, "and we must make him *know* and *feel* it. Katy, *good* may come out of this evil, I hope. I want him to know we have seen him thus. How will we manage it?"

She thought a few moments, and then said:

"I know. Katy, take hold of one arm of this sofa, and we will move it slowly and easily right in front of the mirror. He is certainly *disguised now*, and we will fix him so that he will surely be *revealed to himself* when he opens his eyes again."

Having succeeded in placing him in the position she desired, Dora went to her desk, and taking a sheet of paper, wrote in large letters, and stuck it on the glass,

"O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us,
To see oursels as ithers see us!"

Then placing a lamp burning brightly on each side of the mirror, she withdrew.

It was near daybreak when Harry awoke. He raised up, rubbed his eyes, and beheld himself clearly reflected in the glass before him. At first his mind was much bewildered

concerning his whereabouts. A few moments more, and his eye caught the inscription.

His situation was pretty plain, both to sight and understanding, then. Yes, Dora had seen him decidedly under the influence of several glasses of wine too much. She had placed him in his present position, and written those significant lines, he felt sure. What a fool he had been! Little Dora was far wiser than he! The next thought was how to get out of his trouble. He did not wish to meet his aunt or uncle, and more particularly Dora, until he was in a better condition mentally and physically too. He could very easily get out of the house without disturbing any one, and reach home before the folks were moving about the town. Luckily he had a large cloak and a slouch hat to hide his costume he thought. And should he chance to meet any one, they would readily suppose him one of the neighbor's negroes—his face being stained, to render his character of Othello the more perfect.

In a few moments more he was on his way home. The residence of his uncle was a short distance out of the town. Hurrying on, intently thinking over the occurrences of the night, he neither saw nor heard anything until he was brought to a sudden stand-still by his arms being pinioned behind him, and hearing a loud voice exclaiming:

"*Now* you'll stop, I reckon! I've hollered to you till I'm tired enough! Who are you, and where are you going?" asked the man, who held him firmly. Harry struggled in vain; being of a delicate frame, he was as a child in the hands of the stalwart fellow.

"Unhand me directly, sir! What do you mean by this conduct? You surely do not know me!"

"Think I do. If I mistake not, you're Colonel Bromfield's runaway! Ha, my fine fellow. I've heard you could talk as smart as any white gentleman! But you can't talk me out of taking you into town, and having you locked up until your

master comes to claim you and pay me the reward. Five hundred dollars! A good morning's work. Come on. Jump into my wagon. But I must tie your arms first, you may be troublesome. Come, Dick, lend me a hand here!"

And despite all Harry could do or say, he was tied and placed in the wagon, and carried into the town. It was still very early, few persons stirring. The two countrymen, finding out they could not see the Squire until after breakfast, placed Harry in the station-house or "lock-up," as it was called, until they went to attend to their business of selling their produce to the town people.

At length the hour for the hearing of the case arrived. Harry was taken out, still tied, and marched across the street to the Squire's office.

Then many of the neighboring men had assembled to see the runaway negro.

"Well, what have you to say for yourself, my young fellow?" asked his father.

Harry's rage and mortification had passed off, and now he thought he had better make the best of a bad matter, and hide the real truth of his present embarrassing situation by the appearance of enjoying a good joke.

"Well, sir, who are you?" again asked the Squire.

"Will your honor be kind enough to speak for me? These good people will not believe me, if I tell them," answered Harry, pointing to the men who had captured him. Among the spectators were several who were present the night before. They of course immediately recognized him, and a half-suppressed laugh arose, but a warning gesture from Harry silenced them, and the Squire said:

"*I* tell who you are *indeed*. Never saw you in my life before, that I know of."

"Look, good Squire Duncan!"

The Squire then took out his spectacles, wiped and put them on, and looked intently at the apparent negro before him.

"Let me hear your voice again," said the Squire, "and some one take off his hat for him."

Harry, who had been endeavoring to disguise his voice, now spoke out in his clear natural tones. As the hat was removed, the Squire exclaimed:

"You young rascal! What do you mean by this conduct? masquerading in the public streets in broad daylight! You deserved to be in the 'lock-up.'"

But notwithstanding the Squire's harsh words, he was truly enjoying the joke. His eyes were twinkling merrily. Harry's hands were untied, and going up to the pitcher he poured out some water upon his handkerchief, and rubbed it over his face several times. Then turning, revealed his face to the astonished countrymen.

A loud laugh arose, as Harry asked:

"Father, will you acknowledge me now?"

The Squire explained to the disappointed men all *he* knew of Harry's disguised appearance.

"Five hundred dollars *lost*," said Harry, a little spitefully to his captors, as they, with a decidedly *blank* expression, withdrew from the Squire's office.

"Their loss," said Harry to himself, when alone in his own room; "and how much *my* gain, who can tell? Yes, truly last night's and this morning's experience has gained me the knowledge of my own weakness; and this knowledge will save me from—heaven only knows what dangers. Yes, Dora, you have my promise, and it shall be kept. I will go further than the fellow in the song, who vowed 'never to get *tight* any more.' I'll vow never to run *the risk*."

That evening Harry presented himself again at his uncle's, and in a humorous manner told of his capture as a runaway. And after the old folks had retired, in a candid, manly way, he owned his own weakness, and gave Dora the required pledge; winning from her the promise of a speedy union, much to the delight of Aunt and Uncle Duncan.

THE BOSOM SERPENT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

A GIRL, no longer in the bright bloom of youth, but still very beautiful, sat in an elegant little boudoir, holding before her the miniature of a noble-looking man.

"Why do I keep this?" she murmured. "Why should I ever wish to gaze on the face of one so false? Ah! did ever man possess such deceiving eyes? As I look in them I almost doubt my senses. Five years have passed since he slipped on my finger this ring, and whispered, 'May I come to-morrow and tell you of my love?' He must have heard my answer. Oh! why came he not? Why was that morrow one of such bitter disappointment? How my poor brain has worked to solve the mystery of his not coming! I've grown old, and oh! so weary, watching and waiting. In vain, in vain!"

Quickly she closed the miniature case and hid it away, as her ear caught the sound of coming steps. Almost immediately after a knock on the door was followed by a pleasant voice asking:

"May I come in, sister mine?"

She forced a smile to greet his coming, answering:

"At last you have escaped from your dear five hundred friends. Now I'm to have a chance of looking at you. Just think, three days home, and we have not had three minutes to ourselves."

She tried to assume a pleasant tone, but the brother's quick eye had not failed to detect the great change. Five years be-

fore he had left the brightest and happiest little bird that ever blessed a heart and home. A sigh escaped his heart for the bird that had flown. Drawing his sister down beside him, he pressed his lips to hers, and said:

"It would sound like mockery to call you by the old pet name now, you have grown to be so quiet and dignified. I wish I could stop here; but no, if that were all my heart would not be troubled. It is the tone of sorrow in your voice, the saddened light in your eye. Where is the little Merry I left five years ago?"

"Am I so changed, Herbert? More than others?"

"Yes—no— I met in San Francisco, a few weeks ago, Willis Ralstone—"

Herbert Austin raised his eyes and paused, as he saw the hot blood crimsoning the face, so pale a moment before.

"Miriam!" he said.

Before she answered, "What is it, Herbert?" her face had resumed and increased its paleness.

"Willis Ralstone is, in some way, connected—aye, I fear, perhaps, the very cause of this sad change. Will you not give your brother your confidence? Tell me all, dearest?"

"Herbert, I've nothing to tell. I have not seen him since the night before you left, when we parted at our door. You remember asking him to escort Clare Maynard home?"

"Yes, yes, Miriam. I could have sworn he loved you. Tell me, dear, did he not seek to win your heart? The scoundrel!"

"Hush, Herbert! Do not speak thus of him. There must be some mystery connected with his conduct. I believed he loved me that night he put this ring upon my finger and asked if he might come the next day to tell me of his love—"

"And your answer—"

"I bade him come."

"Oh, that I had known this when I saw him!"

"Tell me of your interview with him? You were about to speak of it."

"Yes, I was going to allude to the change in him. We met on the street. He pressed me to come to see him at his home. I went, and dined with him. But oh, he is no more like the Willis of olden times—quiet, reserved, almost gloomy."

"You were in his home—you dined with him?" she spoke, low, and in a hesitating manner. "Who else did you see?"

Herbert knew the question she wished to ask, yet she dreaded to hear the answer.

"I saw only Mrs. Ralstone. There are no children; that is, I saw nor heard of any. His younger brother lives with him, but was not home then. How such a bright, happy-looking woman could ever have consented to tread the same path in life with such a man as Willis is now, I cannot imagine."

As her brother spoke the words that crushed the hope that had lingered for years in Miriam's heart, she slowly, and unperceived by him, drew from her finger the diamond circlet, and dropped it into the desk beside her.

"One question more, brother, and then we will drop his name forever," she said. "Did he allude in any way to his friends here?"

"Yes; he spoke of Clare Maynard; of her having made a very unfortunate marriage, which was news to me; and when I handed him the picture of Flora's little girl to look at, he said, after looking for about five minutes on it:

"'She is very like her mother.'

"'I think she is like Miriam. She is called little Merry,' I replied.

"'Yes, very like her,' he answered, handing back the picture. I have thought since he did not know what he was saying: for if the child looks like her mother, she could never be like you. Never were sisters more unlike. But enough of

him. Tell me of Clare? I used to think a good deal of her once, but she gave me no encouragement. Where is she?"

"I do not know. She stopped coming here soon after you left. I called twice after, but she did not seem to be glad to see me. Possibly she was disappointed that I could not think more of her cousin, Charles Heywood."

"Oh, that reminds me; Willis has something against him. I spoke of Charley, connected with old times, and, to my immense surprise, he said:

"'We will not speak of him, if you please.' Well, about Clare—whom did she marry, and when?"

"A gambler—so I heard—less than a year after you left. I've never seen her since, and do not even know her name—"

A knock at the door interrupted Miriam. In answer to her permission to enter, the servant announced:

"Gentlemen waiting in the reception-room to see Mr. Barton."

Miriam was not sorry to have her brother called from her; she wanted to be alone to throw aside the mask of calmness. She must battle with those feelings too long held dear; conquer and drive forth from her heart all memories of one she must at length believe false.

With her head bowed on her hand, she sat an hour and more. Sounds from below at length aroused her. Starting up, she approached the mirror. Earnestly examining the features reflected there, she said:

"I would not have Herbert see traces of suffering. I must strive harder to be cheerful, for his sake. I must to work in some way; so long a time have I spent in vain repinings. The surest path to happiness is in making others happy. How the wind blows! It is growing colder. We shall have a bitter night, I fear. I will coax Herbert to go out with me; I know we can find many needy."

She was about stepping into the hall when her brother ascended the stairs.

"Are you going out, Miriam?" he asked, noticing her walking suit.

"Yes, and was just coming to coax you with me."

"It is very cold; I've just come in. Come back a moment—I've something to show you. Read this."

He drew from his pocket a letter, and handed it to her. Opening it, Miriam glanced first at the signature, and exclaimed:

"Clare Garland!" and read:

"Yesterday I saw the announcement of your arrival. Thank Heaven that you have come in time. I never could have found courage to tell Miriam. For the sake of days past, when you were my friend, come to me. Come soon."

"What can she have to tell? Can you imagine, Herbert?" Miriam asked, returning the letter.

"I can imagine, but may be wrong. Will you go with me, Clare?"

"Oh, no, certainly not. I will order the carriage, and leave you. I am going to try and comfort some of the needy ones, but will call for you, if you wish."

"Yes, do; and I will go hurry up Thomas," answered Herbert.

Two hours passed before Miriam's coachman knocked at the door of a very humble house, in a distant part of the city, and announced his mistress waiting.

A moment more, and Herbert came out.

"Do come in, Miriam. Poor Clare! she can live but a brief time. She wishes to see you."

"Can I help or relieve her in any way, think you, Herbert?"

"Indeed, I am sure you can. She is a widow, with one little

girl, who will soon be motherless. I fear she has suffered much. She is very poor."

Miriam sprang out, and followed her brother to Clare's room.

There was scarcely a trace of the once brilliant and beautiful girl remaining.

"Clare, why do I find you thus?" cried Miriam, hurrying to her side. "Why have you not let me come to you long ere this?" she asked, putting her hand out to clasp Clare's.

"No, no, don't speak so kindly; don't take my hand yet. You might cast it off from you in a little while. Oh, how can I tell her? Herbert, you, please!" said the miserable woman, in a low, feeble voice.

Both women turned to look at Herbert, but he was gone.

"Oh, I know. He thought it best we should be alone. Miriam, you may hate me. I deserve it. But oh, have pity for my baby! Miriam, you loved Willis Ralstone—"

"Hush, Clare! Do not speak of him," said Miriam, in a low, trembling tone.

"I must. I loved him, too. I tried to win him. I drove him from you."

"*You!* Oh, Clare! You broke my heart. I believed him false."

"No, no; he loved you. I heard him tell you so. Herbert gave me the chance to drive him from you when he sent him to take me home. I told him how madly Charles Heywood loved you, and that you either returned his love or had been flirting shamefully with him. I offered to prove it to him. On the next day he came to me. I handed him letters, commencing, 'My darling Charles,' and signed, 'Your loving Miriam.' He knew your writing; there was no doubting it. I had only to change letters to me. The Clare was easily altered to Charles. He fled from you and from me, too. I gained nothing but misery and remorse for my crime. Speak to me, Miriam," cried the miserable Clare.

"Speak to you! What can I say? Oh, girl, I trusted you, and you turned and stung me. Days, weeks, months and years have I waited, hoping, aye, hoping still he would come to me and explain the mystery of his absence. But you drove him forth, never, never to come again. Yet he loved me—" Here Miriam's voice broke completely, and she sobbed forth, "Thank Heaven, he was not false. He did love me then. I could forgive you, I believe, for this blessed knowledge."

"Yes, yes, he did. He loves you still."

"Too late!" sobbed Miriam—"too late. Did not Herbert tell you of his marriage?"

A cry of pain escaped the suffering woman.

"He told me nothing. He wished to spare me this. I heard, a few days ago, of Willis's being in San Francisco, and wrote to him, telling all, and entreating his forgiveness."

Here a violent fit of coughing stopped Clare's words, after which she was so exhausted Miriam feared she was dying. And, kneeling beside her, she said:

"I forgive you, Clare, truly, entirely. Your little girl shall be ours—Herbert's and mine."

"Bless you! You will be happy. I know it. God is too good to will it otherwise."

A month after, in Miriam's own home, Clare was sinking rapidly. Everything had been done to ease her suffering and prolong the feeble life, which all knew then could linger but a few hours longer.

Beside her, reading words of comfort and promised forgiveness, sat Miriam, in her arms Clare's little child. She was interrupted by a gentle knock, and Herbert entered, and handed a card to his sister. She looked at it, turned a little paler, and said very low:

"I cannot see him. Do excuse me."

The keen ear of the dying woman caught the words.

"He has come. Thank God. Go to him, Miriam, and bring him to me. Go, go," she cried eagerly.

"Come with me, Herbert," Miriam pleaded.

"We must not leave Clare alone. Go, dear. All will be well," Herbert answered.

Noiselessly she descended the stairs, stopping an instant before opening the door to gain strength and composure.

Ere the intended words of calm and kind welcome escaped her lips, Willis sprang forward with outstretched arms, and clasping her to his bosom, he cried:

"Thank Heaven, my darling, I can come to you at last." He drew her down beside him, still pouring into her ears words of love and joy. She was so bewildered she could neither resist nor strive to check him. At length she managed to recall her senses, and escaped from his side, saying gently:

"I am very glad to see you, Willis. But you must not forget there is *only one* to whom you should speak thus. Did Mrs. Ralstone accompany you?"

"Mrs. Ralstone?"

"Yes, your wife."

"Why, Miriam, darling, what are you talking about? There is but *one* woman in the world whom I could ever call my wife. What do you mean?" Willis said, endeavoring to draw her again to his side.

"Herbert told me of your wife," Miriam said, drawing farther off.

"Oh, I know. What a stupid mistake! Just like mine. I believed you long since married; and the picture Herbert showed me I thought *your* child. It was my brother's wife he met. Now look at me. May I say all I wanted to years ago, darling?"

She yielded to his embrace then, weeping joyous tears on his bosom.

"Come, let us go to Clare. She must know of our happiness. She believed as I," said Miriam.

"Herbert has told her. But we will go. I have years to tell and prove my love," Willis replied.

They went to Clare's room.

"Thank God, you are happy. Oh, I have prayed for this so earnestly. Forgive me, Willis!" she whispered.

"Truly, freely," he answered, kneeling beside her bed and clasping her hand in his. Gently he smoothed the brow on which the dew of death had already gathered.

She smiled gratefully upon him, and whispered:

"Bless you, Willis!"

Again, in a still lower voice, she called:

"Baby!"

Herbert held the little one to her.

As the babe's warm kisses were pressed on the cold lips, a sigh, scarcely audible, escaped them, and the weary heart of Clare had found rest.

HAD HE BUT KNOWN.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"THAT boy has never caused me a moment's sorrow, or an anxious thought, since his baby days," said a friend to me a year ago, pointing to a lad of about eighteen years, who, with several others, was playing a game of ball. His laugh was the loudest, the merriest of all. The father's remark made me particularly attentive to the boy. I watched him with great interest. His blue eyes were like a child's—full of fun, clear and honest. The brown hair was thrown back from a forehead, high, broad and smooth. These were his best features, for he was not handsome—not near so handsome as others around him.

The game was over, and a few moments after the youth joined us, was presented to me, and then turned again to his father, and said:

"I am going home with one of the boys, if you do not wish me to remain here."

"Certainly; go, my boy. Will Julian go, too?"

"I do not know, sir. Can I do anything for you first?"

"Thank you; no, my son." Placing his hand caressingly on him, the father smiled his boy away.

"We call him Benny. When I gave him the name of Benjamin the folks did not like the old-fashioned name. But I did not mind; I insisted on it. And when he was baptized I prayed that he might be a good man—a comfort to our old age.

Aye, and how fully God has answered my prayer! My good boy, Benjamin! 'Son of my right hand!'"

"Your only one?" I asked.

"No. Oh, no; there is one other—Julian."

"And he?"

"Not like Benny. Oh, no! But the apple of his mother's eye—her darling," answered the father, with a grave face.

"Then to his mother he is surely a comfort, or she would not love him thus."

"He loves her, in his way. But, oh, do you not know mothers often love those most who are the most unworthy—that cause them the greatest sorrow?"

"I did know, but cared not to admit it."

"There he is."

I followed the direction of the father's gaze, and saw, seated under a tree not far distant, a youth that looked older than Benny.

"How handsome!" I exclaimed. He was the handsomest youth I had ever seen.

A forehead high and smooth—not broad and full, like his brother's—from which the hair was thrown back in black, silken waves. Beautiful, classical features, and eyes that should have been a girl's—large, dark and soft, beautiful, deceiving eyes!

"How very, *very* handsome!" I repeated, and thought, "Wilful, wayward and wicked, I fear."

"He is handsome, and I fear that will be a curse. For that fatal gift he has been petted, caressed and humored in every whim; while Benny, though older by two years, comes off always second best, except in his father's heart," the father said; and looking again on his handsome boy, he added, "Yet he is affectionate." And then a look came in his eyes, first of regret, followed by another, anxious and fearful.

Friends joining us then, the conversation ceased, and I saw

no more of the boys for many months. They returned to college. Occasionally I met my friend, their father; but the subject was never resumed. It was painful to speak of *one*, I knew, and therefore avoided it.

I was on the eve of going to visit some relatives in B——, in which city these youths were pursuing their studies. I told my friend of my proposed visit, and he begged me to go and see his boys.

I promised, and did so. This was the second time I had seen them. This occasion was impressed more forcibly on my mind than the other, and my heart was filled with great anxiety, dark forebodings.

I carried with me an invitation from my sister, for the boys to attend an entertainment that evening. Benny seemed much pleased, and readily accepted the invitation.

Julian declined, urging in excuse a previous engagement.

He had changed much in the past months, and his looks told plainly of late hours and sleepless nights, not spent in study. His beautiful eyes were no longer clear, and in them I saw the traces of the wine-cup.

"Do come, Jule! As we have holiday this afternoon, you can go get excused, and be with us in the evening. Do," pleaded Benny.

"No! impossible," answered Julian positively.

"Whom is your engagement with, Jule?"

The youth must surely have been off his guard, for the reply, "Fred Marvel," caused Benny to turn pale and compress his lips. Drawing his brother a little apart, he spoke low but earnestly, beseechingly to him. I own I strained every nerve to hear, for I was deeply interested in the handsome youth.

"Julian, oh, do not go with him to-night. I know where he will take you. Think of mother and father! Spare their hearts this additional blow!"

"I've promised, and a man of honor cannot break his word."

"Oh, brother, have you forgotten the promise made to the loved ones at home? Think particularly of our mother—your mother, for you are more to her than I—think of her, and come with me," pleaded Benny.

"Oh, stop! You are such an old fogy, Ben! What is the harm of seeing a little of the world? The 'old man' will never know it, and neither will mother. So stop preaching and go on, you old croaker!"

"Julian, do not speak of father so. Oh, I would give everything I have in the world to keep you away from there. Jule, you want my horse; you may have 'Onward,' if you'll come with me."

"Oh, pshaw. Indeed I cannot. Go on. Besides, mother has promised to buy 'Lady Fair' for me when I go home."

"Mother keeps her promises to her son, and he breaks his to her; and will, I fear, in time break her heart!" said Benny, sadly.

"Go on! If you don't, I'll get angry."

My heart was aching for the good son, the earnest, anxious brother. As he followed with me, he looked so sad, and I said:

"Perhaps your fears are groundless?"

"No, no; he goes with a gambler to-night."

His voice was trembling so he could scarcely speak, and I hastened to draw his thoughts away, if possible.

Once more I stood beside the youths. A week after, when I returned home I was greeted with the sad tidings of the extreme illness of Mrs. Aylmer, Benny and Julian's mother.

"Some terrible shock she received, we cannot imagine what. The servants say she received a letter, in Mr. Aylmer's absence, intended for him. She opened and read it, and fell lifeless to the floor," I was told.

She had long been suffering with some trouble of the heart, I knew.

The next morning I sent a servant to inquire how she was. He returned, telling that Mrs. Aylmer had died a few moments previous to his reaching the house.

"Are the boys home?" I anxiously inquired.

"Mr. Benjamin is. He arrived in the early train."

"In time?"

"Yes, madam; a few hours previous."

Oh, where was Julian? Why could not the best loved have been with the dying mother?

In the afternoon I went to see the bereaved family. Oh, theirs was surely a terrible bereavement!

'Tis hard to give the aged loved one up. But that wife and mother was young, gifted and beautiful. Taken so soon, so fearfully!

When I entered, Benny stood beside the lovely form. He was very pale, but calm. No bursts of sorrow escaped his lips; no pangs of anguish rent his heart. No, no. As he spoke to me of her, his lips quivered, and tears stole gently down, as once or twice he stooped to kiss, first the brow, and then the hands of the beautiful dead.

Benjamin had no cause for such anguish as I witnessed later. No; his heart was free from regrets. Never by one act had he given sorrow to his mother's heart. He had received her parting blessing. On his head her hand had rested, as she whispered:

"My good son! God bless little Benny!"

"She seemed to be thinking of me in my baby days," he said, when relating this to me.

While I still stood gazing on the coffined face the door opened, and Julian rushed in, pale, terrified, and threw himself across his mother's coffin, laid his head on her cold bosom, and groaned:

"Oh, my God, this is too hard! Mother, mother, why, why could not you have been spared? My beautiful, loving mother! Oh, I never dreamed of this! I never thought you could die! Mother, mother, I loved you; oh, I loved you! I would give my very life to bring you back! Cannot you whisper one little word, 'Forgive?' If I could only recall the past—the dreadful past. Too late, too late!"

On and on he talked, praying for forgiveness. And then Benny drew him away, and in a few moments returned, saying,

"He has a more terrible blow yet to bear. I tried to spare him it, but father thinks it must be. Perhaps it may save him.

"I will tell you, for you will surely hear it. That night, you remember, when I pleaded with him to come with us? It was as I feared. He was there until a late hour, and then—then carried out to the college, crazed with wine. I never dreamed the President would send the dreadful news home, but he did. Mother opened the letter in father's absence. She read it, and her heart broke. We were telegraphed to come home; Julian would not. He thought mother was not dangerously ill. She was looking for him when she sank into the last sleep."

Scarcely had Benjamin ceased when a groan came from the next room—a groan bitter, terrible, heart-rending—from the miserable youth. I think he will be saved; I hope so. But at what a fearful cost!

In the future he may grow great, for he is rarely gifted. He will be admired, flattered, courted. But will that stop the ceaseless regrets? Society, the world, may praise and render him homage. But, oh! what is all that to those words, "God bless *my good* son," from a dying mother's lips? Yes, he would give all, everything, for those blessed words. Too late—too late! 'Tis past, the time for that! In another's ear, sinking to his very heart, will come, in the future, words worth all the world's proudest gifts: "My good son—'son of my right hand'—God bless *thee*, as thou hast me!"

A MODERN BLUE-BEARD.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"NOW, Laura, you have shown me all your beautiful dresses, and the crowning glory of the imported bridal-dress from Worth's, and all your splendid jewels. Now I want you to show me the greatest treasure of all—the picture of the happy man."

The scene was the boudoir of a bride elect in one of the most magnificent mansions on Fifth Avenue. The speaker, Lottie Summers, a frank, handsome, resolute-looking young lady, of some twenty years of age. Miss Lottie had come from her distant Southern home to act as bride's-maid at the approaching wedding of her school-mate and dear friend, Miss Dormer.

Laura Dormer was the only child and heiress of a late New York banker of great wealth. She was now living under the guardianship of an aged grandmother, whose happiness was to spoil her darling child.

Beautiful, accomplished and wealthy, Laura was admired very much, and her hand sought by many. For four years she had reigned as belle, and until she was twenty-two no one had succeeded in making more than a passing impression on her.

"Will you never yield that stubborn heart of yours, Laura?" her grandmother had asked, adding: "I should like to know you safe within the protecting arms of a true, good husband, before I leave you, dear."

Laura answered, with her arms lovingly clasping the aged form:

"Time enough, grandma. And if you will just try, I do think you may live for many years yet. You are only seventy, and folks *do* live to be a hundred."

"Yes, yes, dear, but it is better to have our house in order. I *would* like to be a great-grandma; but I am content in His will, having myself but one wish for the future, and that for my darling's happiness," said the old lady, in a sweet, low tone.

"Well, grandma, dear, rest easy about my heart; stubborn as it has been it *may* yield before long, and when I *have* learned to love, you know what it will be, you know how I *can* love, don't you?"

This was said a few days after Laura had met, for the first time, the one who afterward won her promise to be his, much to the surprise of all her friends.

He was nearly twenty years older than Laura, handsome enough, certainly, but grave almost to melancholy.

The bad taste she had evinced in her selection, as they considered it, was very much to the disgust of her younger and gayer suitors.

Laura was very happy in her choice, and Grandma Dormer well pleased, and urged a speedy day for their union.

Lottie Summers had just arrived; the wedding was to be the next day. All the elegant trousseau had been examined and admired; and then Lottie begged to be shown the likeness of the favored one.

Laura, opening a jewel-case, drew forth and handed her friend the miniature, saying:

"Look now, and tell me if he is not the handsomest man you ever saw? Has he not a noble brow? His eyes"—she stopped suddenly.

Lottie's bright face had undergone, like magic, a wonderful change. With a look of abhorrence, she threw down the picture, as Laura inquired, anxiously:

"What is the matter, Lottie? Why do you look so strangely?"

"Handsome! Noble! *No!* He is the very *worst* man I ever knew! The most atrocious wretch!" Lottie exclaimed, her eyes flashing, as she continued: "The diabolical monster! To dare to make love to you!"

"Lottie, Lottie! you have surely lost your mind! What do you mean by such dreadful language?" cried Laura.

"I mean just what I have said! That he is a wretch! a monster! a perfect Blue-Beard!"

"Hush! How dare you speak so of him to me? Oh, but I know 'tis not of my love you are talking! His picture is like some one you have known. Come, tell me what you mean, that I may correct the mistake you have made," Laura said, her face still pale with anxiety.

"Yes, I will explain; but there is no mistake. Oh, that face is a most terrible one to me. It is ten years since I last saw it; but with the dreadful scene of that day, it is so engraven on my mind and heart, that neither can ever be forgotten. Laura, darling, you must give him up! Thank Heaven! I am in time to save you. Yes, even though it may break your heart, you must cast him forth!"

"Lottie, what fearful words you are saying! Explain—do. Do you see I am almost dying with terror! Give up! Cast forth! No, no!" the poor girl cried, pale and trembling.

"Yes, Laura, you must, you will cast him entirely from your heart, when you know him as I do. The wretch! Now while seeking to make you his, he has two living wives!"

"No, no; 'tis false! You mistake him for some other!" Laura cried.

"I do not mistake. After I have told you my story I will confront him. And you will know then what an atrocious wretch he is. I never imagined the Henry Read you wrote me of was the man who had desolated my home, and broken

the heart of one very dear to me. You have heard me speak of my aunt (Sister Agnes.) Ten years ago that man won her heart, and led her to the altar. They were married—"

"Oh, *no*, NO! I will not believe it!" Laura cried out, and then sank back, sobbing, on the sofa.

"Yes, he married her. Three days after the happy bride was in the beautiful home to which he had carried her, when a visitor was announced.

"The smile that wreathed on her sweet lips when she turned to greet the stranger was the last one I ever saw on my aunt's face.

"A portrait of Mr. Read hung over the mantel. Without a word of introduction or preface to the dreadful announcement, the woman walked directly in front of the picture, and pointing to it, said:

"'That man is my husband!'"

A groan escaped Laura Dormer as she hid her face deeper in the cushions of the sofa.

"A surprised and indignant expression was in my aunt's face, as she looked at the accusing woman, and replied:

"'Tis false! *You* his wife!' And turning again to the handsome, pictured face, she added:

"'I might possibly believe you his mother.'

"A wicked, triumphant look was on the woman's face, as she said:

"'The coming ten years may make as great changes in your fair face as the past ten have in mine.'

"Then, unclasping her pocket-book, she drew forth two papers, opened and handed them to my aunt, saying:

"'Here are the proofs of what I say.'

"Never shall I forget the blanched and horror-stricken face that turned from the papers, and with a cry of anguish my aunt fell fainting on the sofa beside me.

"It is needless for me to tell you the dreadful scene that followed.

"That afternoon my aunt left his house forever. She had read the proofs—the marriage license and the clergyman's certificate.

"Henry Read did not attempt to deny his marriage, but only produced a bill of divorce which he had secured eight years before. You know, Laura, our Church does not permit or acknowledge divorces—only the death of one allows the second marriage of the other.

"A severe illness followed the terrible shock, after recovering, or rather convalescing, from which, aunt entered the Order of the Sisters of Mercy."

"And what of him? What was his defence? Oh, I know he is not what you believe him. He is not so wicked," Laura said, raising her face, so pale and tear-stained, to Lottie's.

"Oh, of course, he told the best story he could make up. And succeeded in making aunt believe him unfortunate, not wicked."

"His defence—tell me it," Laura cried.

"He said, when scarce twenty, he was fascinated—ensnared, I suppose—by a woman much older than himself. He married her when still in college, and learned soon after that she cared only for his money. Having secured all she could of value, she eloped with a circus-rider, much to the satisfaction and relief of Read's family and friends, who soon after assisted him in procuring a divorce. I have never seen or even heard of him since he left our village, over ten years ago. Now, Laura, you see, you must give him up. Bear up, darling. He is not worthy of you."

"I will not condemn him, until from his own lips I hear it," said Laura. "And even then I will never believe him wicked; only unfortunate, and the victim of cruel circumstances."

They were interrupted by a knock at the door, and

a servant entering, announced Mr. Read waiting in the parlor.

"You must come now, Lottie; I cannot see him alone," said Laura, in a choking voice.

And hastily bathing her face, she smoothed back the clustering ringlets, and turned to leave the room, beckoning Lottie to follow her.

Light and almost noiseless as were her steps, the ear of love caught the sound of her coming. Opening the door, he stood with open arms to welcome her.

"My own darling—"

He stopped suddenly, as she stepped back, putting forward her hands, and waving him off.

"What is it, love?" he asked, anxiously. "Are you ill?" a look of alarm in his eyes, as they rested on her pale and suffering face.

Trembling, she stood clasping the back of a chair for support, and trying to conquer the emotion which choked back the words she wanted to speak.

"Oh, my darling, why do I find you thus?" he asked, unmindful of a stranger's presence, and stepping forward again, with extended arms.

Shrinking farther from him, and turning to Lottie, she asked, in a low, hoarse voice:

"Do you know that young lady?"

"Indeed I have not that pleasure," answered Mr. Read, after looking earnestly at Lottie, who stood with indignant and flashing eyes regarding him.

Before Laura could command sufficient calmness to speak again, Lottie asked:

"Did you ever have the pleasure of knowing one who bore the name of Charlotte Austin?"

A half-suppressed exclamation of pain escaped Henry Read's lips, as the hot blood quickly mounted to his brow,

and an instant after he grew even as pale as Laura, when, in a low, constrained voice, he answered:

"That was but a brief pleasure, resulting in great sorrow."

Turning again to Laura, he said, in a tone of great sadness:

"I know now why I find you thus."

"Is it true? Oh, say it is not! Tell me Lottie wrongs you," cried Laura, raising her agonized face to his, and continuing: "She says I must give you up—that—that—"

The poor girl's voice faltered and broke completely. She could not utter the dreadful words.

"I say that twice you have married, and both women are living now, my aunt being one of them," said Lottie, flashing an angry glance upon him.

"You have heard your friend's story, Laura, and I have no doubt she has told you truly. When I wooed Miss Austin, I considered myself free to do so. I truly loved her, and for years mourned her as lost. I should have told you my sorsows before I won your promise to be mine, I know, but my heart failed me. I feared frightening away your love, which was, and is, more than all the world to me—more than ever woman's love before. Must I lose you, Laura? You know you have filled my whole soul with peace and joy. How can I lose you?"

His whole frame was quivering with emotion, as he stood with extended arms before her.

Lottie, either fearing Laura's heart would no longer resist his pleading, or wishing to end the painful interview, put her arms around her, and sought to draw her from the room.

Passively the poor girl yielded, until they reached the door. Then throwing off Lottie's arm, she hastened across the room, to where Henry Read stood, and held out her hand, saying:

"I *know* that you are good and true. I shall never believe aught else. But I can never be yours while other women who have borne your name still live. You must not come to me again. Go, now."

She fled from his clasping arms, and followed Lottie from the room.

It was a nine days' wonder, of course—the indefinitely postponed wedding, the cause of which, however, was attributed to the extreme illness to which Laura was reduced by the terrible shock.

However, when, many weeks after, Laura was well enough to ride out, and nothing was heard of the time for her marriage being again fixed, folks began to wonder anew; and when it was known that Mr. Read no longer visited her, there began the wildest speculations and rumors concerning the very mysterious affair.

Nearly a year had passed, when one day Laura sat in Grandma Dormer's room, trying to cheer the old lady, who had grown very feeble lately. She had just closed the book, wearied by long reading, when a servant entered, and handed her a letter. The writing was very familiar. It was from Henry Read, the first since their parting. She still held it unopened, when the bearer said:

"Mr. Read is waiting in the drawing-room."

By a great effort, she grew calm enough to dismiss the servant, unwilling she should witness the agitation the perusal of the letter might cause her.

Tearing open the envelope, she unfolded the letter. Two pieces cut from newspapers dropped in her lap. Picking them up, her eyes first rested on the one bearing these lines:

"DIED—On the thirteenth instant, of yellow fever, at New Orleans, Sister Mary Agnes, formerly Charlotte Austin, aged thirty-two years."

The other bore the date of three years before, and contained the following extract, from a foreign paper:

"We regret to announce the death, this morning, of the popular equestrienne, Lucille Trivarre, from the effect of the fall last evening."

Many of our readers will, no doubt, remember the marriage of this woman with a young man of one of the wealthiest and most influential families of our State; the subsequent elopement with the man whose name she afterwards bore; and the ultimate divorce obtained by the unfortunate young man.

Henry Read's letter contained but a few words. But never letter brought so much joy and peace to Laura before.

"Darling, I am free! Come to me!" he wrote.

A few moments more and she was beside him, clasped to his bosom, again his promised wife.

The marriage, which was strictly private, astonished the fashionable circles of W—— quite as much as the interruption had more than a year before.

Grandma Dormer's mind was at last made easy and very happy, when she laid her hand, with a blessing, on the head of Laura's husband.

"Surely I must have won forgiveness from Heaven at last, or I never should have been so blessed. My suffering, perhaps, has atoned for the folly of my youth," Henry Read said, turning from grandma to his lovely bride.

"How much you *have* suffered," Laura answered, passing her hand soothingly over the hair that had grown so gray during the months of their separation.

"Not more than I deserved. All my sorrow has been the result of disobedience to God's command. Had I been a dutiful son, I should have been saved all that has now passed, thank Heaven, save the remembrance and everlasting regret of having brought few joys and great sorrows to the hearts of those to whom I should have been the crowning blessing of their departing years."

HIS LITTLE LOVE.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"COME, Birdie, nurse is waiting! Run now, and let her fix your curls. You must look very neat, or Mr. Everton will not love you. It is almost dinner-time, and he will soon be here," said Birdie's mother.

Immediately the child sprang up, raised her sweet lips to kiss mamma, and followed the nurse from the room.

"It is perfectly wonderful how much influence Mr. Everton has over that child! Just tell her to do anything, and say it will please him, and that is enough. I never saw anything like it," the little lady said, turning to a friend sitting beside her, who answered:

"I have; and I would not encourage, or rather I would endeavor to overcome that influence."

"Now, my dear Ada, what is troubling that wise head of yours? What means that grave look and anxious light in your eye?"

"Nellie Hayden, I'm perfectly astonished at people, whose duty it is to watch over and guard their little ones, particularly their girls, from sorrow, planting in their young hearts seed that may grow to be thorns, and treating children as though they were void of any deeper thought and feeling than the appreciation of a doll, or box of toys. I am sure some children of five years have hearts that love as devotedly, and suffer as keenly, as many of mature years. You are shaking your head. I want to tell you a little story, to prove my

assertion. We have half an hour before dinner. Will you listen?"

"Yes, certainly. But it must have a happy ending," answered Mrs. Hayden.

"I cannot promise. Perhaps the end has not yet come. You know Dora Peyton?"

"I do, certainly. A lovelier girl I never knew. Why she has never married has been a source of wonderment to me."

"Aye, and to many who know her not so well as I. It is of her I am going to tell you. Twenty-five years ago, when just at the age of your Birdie, and just as loving too, a young man crossed her path. We will call him Abner Lynton. He was a class-mate and the dearest friend of Dora's brother. At a party given during the Christmas holidays by Mrs. Peyton, Abner, to pique one of the girls, attached himself for the evening to little Dora, dancing with her, promenading through the rooms with her tiny hands clasped in his, much to the annoyance of many bright-eyed lassies, who really were envious of the baby girl. Abner was very handsome and very fascinating, a universal favorite with the ladies, young and old. Several mammas endeavored to draw him from his 'little love,' as he called her, and manœuvred to get her from him, but all in vain, until wearily the sunny head drooped, and with her arms around his neck, her sweet lips giving the good-night kiss, she sank to sleep. Gently then he resigned her to her nurse's care. Every day from that time he came to the house. His home was quite near. At the sound of his voice Dora sprang forward with outstretched arms to meet him. I have seen her sit with her hand in his, looking up into his face for an hour, seemingly perfectly happy. Of course this was noticed by the family, and commented upon. The child's older sisters and brothers could win her even to do their will by saying:

"I'll tell Mr. Lynton, if you don't; and he won't love you then."

Daily she gathered a little bouquet for him, and when the autumn days came, and the flowers were few, the little love would watch closely the slowly opening buds, lest some one else should get them. So the days passed by, for two years, and then for a time she was separated from the one she had grown to love so dearly.

"Better than brother?" they would sometimes ask her.

"Yes," would come the whispered answer, quickly.

"Better than sister?"

"Yes," without hesitation, again the whisper came.

"Than father and mother?"

And then the deep blue eye would grow so earnest, and the pretty lips would part and close again, as if unwilling to utter the words she feared might wound. When pressed to answer, her eyes sought mamma, then papa, as if pleading their forgiveness, and, "I tan't help it; just a little tiny bit more!" she murmured, and buried her head in Abner's bosom. She clung around his neck, and begged to go with him when the hour of parting came. With promises of a speedy return and letters very often, he managed to soothe her.

Perhaps the child might have, in time, been weaned from this strange attachment, if they had ceased to talk to her of him; but possessing as it were a magic wand to guide her actions, they used it freely.

How well I remember, as she stood eagerly watching the carrier as he came from door to door! As nearer he drew, she grew so excited and anxious that my heart trembled lest she should be disappointed. But the letter came; and, with a wild cry of joy, she pressed it to her bosom, and ran with it for "mamma to read." His absence was short. He returned, bringing her, for a Christmas gift, a pretty little chain to which was attached a locket with his picture.

For Abner, she learned to read, to write. For him, she would grow brave, and with his hand holding hers, she had

her first teeth drawn. When ill with fever—tossing restlessly from side to side—his hand could always quiet, his voice soothe. Without murmur, she would take from him the nauseous doses.

"How will all this end?" I asked her mother once, and lightly she replied:

"Oh, all right, of course. She will learn to love some one nearer her own age—when the proper time comes—and he will be married long before then. He has a distant cousin, who is now in Europe, that I am inclined to think he is engaged to. I am *sure* their parents are anxious for their union."

As Dora grew older a little shyness crept gradually into her manner. Still the love was there. Once in a moment of confidence she came to me and asked:

"Do you believe Mr. Abner loves Katie May better than he does me? Frank says he does. That he stayed by her all the time at the party last night. I wish I was old enough to go to parties; and I wish—indeed I do—"

"What, Dora?" I asked, as she hesitated.

"I wish Katie May didn't live in this world—*indeed* I do." Nodding her head decidedly, while striving to force back the tears.

"Oh! oh! Dora. This is dreadful," I said, drawing her within my arms.

"Well, then, I wish Mr. Abner and I lived somewhere else, where Katie May wouldn't come," she sobbed.

I assured her that Abner did not love Katie May, that Frank was only teasing her.

When she was ten years old, Abner was called suddenly away by the severe illness of his nearest relative, an uncle, residing in a distant State. There was only time for a hasty good-by.

"Don't let anybody win your heart from me, my little love. Make haste to grow fast and be a tall girl, against I come back," he said, kissing her good-by.

His going was so sudden, she did not seem to realize it. I was glad it was so. But now, I pitied the little thing, when, day after day, as she had done for years, she sat in the door, and watched.

"*May be* he *might* come," she said once to me.

Letters came often to Frank, with messages of love for her. Sometimes a little note, accompanying a gift, to her. Food enough to keep her loving little heart from suffering, he gave; and fuel enough to keep the love brightly burning. But he came not, nor promised of his coming.

Time passed on; the pretty child grew to be a beautiful maiden. Youths gathered about her, and friends had ceased their talk of Abner. Other names were mentioned as his had been; yet, none could win an answering smile or blush. I knew for whom her love she kept.

The waiting, yearning look in her eyes gave way at last, and a joyous light broke forth. Abner was coming back. A letter to Frank brought the glad tidings. He wrote:

"I've a secret to tell you, dear boy. But, no, I'll keep it for a surprise, in which you will rejoice, for my sake, I am sure. In a few days I shall be with you."

Again, as in her baby days, Dora began her watching. Oh, I know her heart was singing a joyous song, though the sweet lips gave forth no sound.

She stood on the porch, waiting his coming. Clothed in fleecy white, roses in her hair, and roses on her cheeks.

"Dora!" Frank came towards her. The boy's face had lost its usual look of merriment—his voice its careless tone.

"Dora, Abner came on the train a while ago"—he paused, darting an anxious, searching glance at his sister's face—"and he was not alone. I'll not let him surprise you, little Sis. I've hurried home to tell you his wife is with him."

The light went out of eye and heart. The roses faded quickly on the young face, and whiter than the dress she

wore, she stretched forth her hand to grasp the balustrade. Frank sprang forward to catch her fainting form. Like a broken lily, he bore her in.

When Abner came, she knew it not. For many days her gentle spirit hovered between the shores. Sometimes, since, I've almost regretted that it passed not away to the other and brighter one. But she was left with us, for a wise purpose, I know. She has never seen Abner since his marriage. Three years after, she sent to his little girl, who bears her name, the chain and locket she used to wear.

"Where is he now?" Mrs. Hayden asked.

"Somewhere out West, I believe. I've not heard of him for years. I know not if he lives."

"Thanks for your story, Ada. But I wish its ending had not been so sad."

"Then its lesson would have been less powerful."

"True—I must profit by it without delay. I will send Birdie home with mother to-morrow. The change will do her good and break the spell." ———

A few days after this Ada Ashton came to see Birdie's mother, and said, with a bright smile:

"I've come to change the ending of my story of the other day. In fact the end *had* not then come. Here are Dora's wedding cards. Her Abner has been a widower over two years. Hear what she writes to me:

"'Forgive me for keeping my happiness from you, my dear friend. But I have not been able to realize sufficiently that this great joy was for me to speak of it to others. Now that it is so near, and he is with me, surely it must be. You, who have known so much, must know all now. He loved and was pledged to her before he knew me. You will be glad to know this. I was. Had I known it, it would have soothed greatly the agony of those bygone days.'

"We were at Dora's wedding yesterday. A happier, lovelier bride I never saw."

FOR WANT OF ONE WORD.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

EDWARD BARTON entered the sitting-room, dropped into the arm-chair, and with a great sigh dropped his head on his hand. In an instant, a gentle, frail-looking little woman was beside him, bending with anxious eyes over him, as she asked:

"Are you sick, dear?"

"Yes; sick enough. Almost sick of life—"

"Oh, Edward! what is it? What has troubled you so? Bad news from home?"

"Bad enough home without going elsewhere to find trouble, I think. I have heard nothing from our old folks. I suppose it is all right with them. It always is with them. Somehow they manage, and have ever since my remembrance, to live within their income. Mother seems to understand how to do it."

There was a sharp tone in his voice—a real meaning in the words—that was unmistakable,—and worse than all, one—two—three cuts that went straight to the poor, sorely-tried heart, wounding it severely. A painful flush spread quickly over the pale face, and a sharp retort rose to her lips, but no farther. It was pressed back. The quivering mouth tightly closed, kinder thoughts filled the true heart and tears the soft, sweet eyes.

"Poor Edward, something—everything—must have gone wrong with him to-day. It is the first of the month; and he is worried enough. I won't mind if he is cross."

She placed her hand gently on his shoulder, and asked:

"What is the particular trouble, dear? Tell me, perhaps I can help you!"

"It is no use. I'm tired of striving to get along. I'm worried to death!"

"Oh, Edward, don't talk so! Please don't. Just think how much we have to be thankful for. Your own good health; and mine—well, I am almost well, and getting stronger, I hope; and think of the children all well over that terrible fever. It might have been different. Look over the way; a little coffin went in there last week, another to-day."

"For mercy's sake, hush, Susie! I can't, to save me, see how imagining ills can relieve real troubles," Edward said, turning his back to the window, through which he could see the badge of sorrow on the door of his friend across the street.

"The real trouble of our neighbors, Edward, should make us more fully appreciate our great blessings, and make us strong to bear and overcome our difficulties. I think that is the true name for the present subject of annoyance," Susie said, gently.

"Yes, that's a woman's way of thinking and talking. Of course it might be worse. Coming home, I might have slipped and broken my leg; and upon reaching home, I might have found you down with the small-pox; and one of the young ones, not having your watchful eye upon him, might have been playing with fire and gotten nearly or entirely burned up, and—and—"

"Don't stop, dear; finish the chapter of accidents. Willie, while running across the way screaming for help, might have been run over and crippled for life; and little Fannie, trying to get away from the terrible scene, might have fallen down the cellar steps; and the remaining two little ones, of course, might be in a fair way of taking the terrible disease from me. Ah, there now, a smile has come at last. Do, dear, cheer up!

Let us look these difficulties straight in the face and conquer them. Indeed we can. Only just let us consult together and work together. Now tell me all about it," Susie said, pleadingly.

"I'd like to know how we can get over these difficulties, as you wish me to call my trouble. How can we pay bills to the amount of one hundred and seventy dollars with just one hundred? That's what the matter is; and I am just worried to death!"

"I know it is rather annoying. But, indeed, if you will only keep up heart and just look a wee bit cheerful, I can work so much better."

"How can I look cheerful? Do you know that the grocery bill is ten dollars more this month, the butcher's six, the milkman's four dollars instead of two and a half? Then from the druggist I was surprised by a pleasant reminder of eleven dollars and seventy-five cents owed there. Gas, almost double the amount of last month. These, with a half-dozen little balances on last year's bills, are just about driving me crazy. If this goes on—"

"But it won't, dear, indeed it will not. You don't reflect that in the month of December we always consume rather more of almost everything. Then you forget the children's illness and the friends who helped me take care of them, and the long nights when we watched them. The gas, of course, was used more than usual—I'm sure double as much. But this is all over now. If the children will only keep well—and I think they will, they've had almost every disease incident to childhood—we shall soon be all right again."

"Oh, Susie, it is well enough for you to talk so, but I can't feel any way but very gloomy. I am harassed and worried enough all day. You, here, quiet at home, nothing to worry about, you cannot imagine the state my mind is in."

Susie only gave a little sigh in answer to this. She *might*

have told him how she had worried her poor little brain to raise Willie a pair of shoes without going to papa for them; of her hunting up all the old papers and empty bottles for him to sell. Then, how she had coaxed his sisters to give their little savings, and when *all* resources were drained, only a dollar and twenty-five cents was raised. The shoes would cost fifty cents more.

"We *can't* do it, mamma," said Willie, with quivering lips, adding, "I wouldn't care, only the walking is too bad, and my rubbers leak so. I'm afraid of getting that old sore throat again. I don't want that, and I do want to keep my place at the head of my class. Oh, what shall we do?"

"I know, love! I hate to part with it. But it could not be put to a better use—your silver half-dollar, Willie. Get it, pet!"

"All right! That's it, mamma! I don't care, do you?" the little man asked, with a doubtful look in his eyes.

"Never mind, dear," she said. And when Willie ran away to get his hat she kissed the coin on which were the prints of her first-born's teeth. With a sigh in her heart, but a smile on the lips, she bent to kiss her boy and sent him forth.

More she might have told of the annoyances and trials of her days. That one in particular when the wash-woman came for her pay and found her without a cent in the house. Mortified and distressed at the idea of having to send her off unpaid, she offered the woman more than double the amount due in the way of a really nice dress; and when feeling greatly relieved that her offer was gratefully accepted, she was surprised by the housemaid, who having set her mind on the dress, flew into a violent temper, and after having driven her almost wild by a tirade of abuse, cleared out. With all the additional household cares baby was fretful and cross. The poor little mother had hard work to put on a cheerful face to greet her husband's coming. How had she been rewarded? All these she had kept to herself for fear of worrying him.

"Give me the bills, Edward, and don't worry any more. I promise you they shall not be presented again, and in six months' time you shall be entirely relieved from this embarrassment," Susie said, holding out her hand.

"Nonsense, child, what can you do?"

"I can help you, Edward. Please give them to me. Your office work is enough for you without worrying over these things. Let me have what money you can, and then just brighten up a little," she plead.

Unwillingly he yielded at last—ungraciously, I should say—for while resigning to her the burden, he predicted a complete failure.

And then, with a true, brave heart, she went to her work of retrenchment.

The money on hand was distributed among the creditors; payments made to all, in part, with a pleasant little note, promising more as soon as possible.

"And now, the first thing I must try to reduce is the grocery bill. But Edward must not feel this increasing economy. One thing I will give up—my wine and egg every day. Now that baby is baby no more, I shall not need it; I am so much stronger. That will save at least ten cents a day, and I can learn to drink coffee in the morning and—"

Yes, and so it was from that time; the rigid economy was practised almost entirely on herself. No servant was engaged in place of the indignant Bridget, and Susie worked on, day and night. Through the long lonely hours, when all others slept, she worked; sometimes at the sewing-machine—sometimes copying, writing, or adding up long columns of figures—any kind of work, to earn something to help Edward along.

At the end of the next month she triumphantly held to her husband the grocery bill, saying:

"See, dear. It is fifteen dollars less!"

How eagerly she watched for an approving word—a smile. But it came not.

It was his way, she knew; but it hurt her. He might have said "well done," just for once, she thought. And so the days and weeks and months went on; and ever in her heart remained that longing for one word of encouragement.

Once, in an hour of weakness, a cry escaped the hungry, starving heart. A friend, her dearest schoolmate, said:

"Susie, you are getting thin and very pale. You are working too hard, dear—and for what? You look so tired, always, now—"

"Yes—for what, oh! Mary, for what will never come, I fear. Have *you* ever watched, waited—panting for one approving word—starving, almost dying for it? Oh, if Edward could only say one word, give one little encouraging smile, it would give me all I want—food, rest, joy!" And then with her arms about Mary's neck, she sobbed pitifully.

"I detest such men!" exclaimed the impulsive Mary. "I'd like to deal with such a one!"

Then Susie, with her soft eyes full of reproach, said:

"How can you talk so? You don't understand. He is good, and never scolds. It is his way. He can't help it. And I'm ashamed of myself for speaking so. Edward don't mean to be unkind, and he isn't either."

"Well, Susie, I don't want to hurt you, but I must say 'his way' is a most disagreeable way, and if I was his wife I'd feel it my duty to teach him some other way. I'd sooner he would scold and blow sometimes, to have him considerate and appreciative at others. But, dear, pray don't work and worry yourself to death; do rest a little."

"Yes, yes, I shall rest by-and-by, when I earn the right. I won't have to work much longer," Susie said.

Paler and thinner she grew; but Edward noticed it not. He was but little at home, except at night. Always so busy, with so much on his mind, he had not chance to find out what everybody else knew, that Susie was working herself to death.

Her eyes were bright, her cheeks quite rosy, often when she sat with him in the evening, and he never dreamed that it was not the sign of health and strength.

The six months were passed. Eagerly she watched for his coming. How could she wait? How long he was! At length she heard his step, and started up to meet him.

"I am tired—I must wait here," she said, panting, and pressing her thin hand over her heart, as she sank into a chair.

"Here, Edward! come here! See! The six months are over and you are all right again. Here are all the bills receipted, and here is a hundred dollar bill to put aside. Now, dear, are you glad?"

Edward was surprised into exclaiming:

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, yes. Say, oh, say, are you glad? Are you relieved? Have I done well?"

The cry was unnatural, almost wild.

And then, looking up anxiously into her face, Edward saw how pale and thin it was. There was a look in her eyes that drew forth, at last—aye, at last—the long-waited-for words:

"Indeed, my darling, you have done well—you have made me a free man again. God bless you!"

A beautiful, joyous smile burst forth over her whole face, as she held her lips up for his kiss.

The children were coming. She attempted to get up to meet them.

"Sit still and rest. I will give them their supper. You are tired," he said, as the little ones came in and clustered around mamma.

"Yes, I can rest now. I am resting. Come kiss mamma, babies, little darlings, and Willie, mamma's little man. There, take care of sisters, dear, and help them. Mamma going to rest a while."

Many times Edward turned from the children to cast an anxious glance on Susie.

The twilight was deepening. He saw her eyes close gently, and whispered:

"Hush-sh, children! mamma is sleeping."

He would not light the gas, for fear of arousing her. After a while, a little four-year-old girl, awed by the darkness, stole up to mamma's side and tried to climb into her arms.

"Mamma cold—oh, so cold! Dit her sorl."

Edward started up, struck the gas; clasped the poor, little, cold hand; gazed terrified into the sweet, placid face; and then with a cry of anguish, sank down beside her, and poured forth the words of love that should have gladdened her heart and brightened her young life all the years gone by. At last—yes, during the last moments of life, he had given her the coveted food—loving, approving words. Satisfied, grateful, happy, she had gone to rest—her work done, the reward won!

THE DRESS COAT.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"A CALM at last. Well, I suppose the all-important matter is decided, else why this blessed time of peace? For forty-eight hours past I've neither been able to speak a word, or even to collect my thoughts, for your incessant clattering. Well, well! I shall be glad when this grand ball is over. It is the last, is it not?"

"Yes, papa, the last. Oh, dear, I *do* wish—"

The lovely face that looked up into Mr. Percy's was clouded considerably.

"What! isn't the coast clear yet? What is that frown for, Rose? Has Lily, with her tucks, folds, ruffles, flounces and puffs, left you a scant pattern? Or has Pink, with her usual perversity, insisted on making a blue Rose of you?"

"Oh, no, you teasing papa, nothing of the kind. Everything concerning our dress is all decided. But now something quite as important is worrying us—that is, Pink and Lily—fixed it to my perfect satisfaction, but they won't hear of it," Rose said, with a pretty little pout.

"Of *it!* Well, what does *it* mean? I will help you in this affair, as my decision will be against neither man nor woman. I shall not mind speaking against a neuter gender."

"Now, papa, I just believe you can read my thoughts. You do love to tease me so. The *it* of this question happens to be a man."

"Oh, Rose! I declare you will have to go back to school.

Just to think of a young lady, a graduate of a seminary, calling—"

"A walking-stick—something to lean upon—*it*. Certainly I do," laughingly interrupted Rose. "And now, Mr. Papa, correct me if you can. We want this necessary appendage. Now, who shall it be?"

"Not me, I vow, after what you said, Miss Rose. You have fixed the gender, and now I claim to be the mood, which declines altogether. But now to business. Where is Foster?" asked Mr. Percy, looking at Lily, who answered:

"Oh, he will go with us, of course. But it would be—"

"Rather more than so slight a stick could stand."

"Oh, *do* stop, Rose, and try to be sensible just for once," Lily said. "Papa, you know, three ladies with only one escort does not speak very well for the personal merits of said young ladies."

"That's so, Lily. Well, let me see! Why, yes—certainly, of course. Just the one! The best fellow I know. A fine young man—a perfect gentleman! Oh, yes, it is all right now. And, bless my heart! here he comes now! That is his ring."

"Who?" inquired the girls, simultaneously.

"Why, who else could I mean but young Whitely?"

"Hush, papa, dear! For mercy's sake, do not speak of it before him! It is perfectly impossible; we could never go with him. We'll explain when he has gone," Pink said, in a low, earnest tone.

And Mr. Percy had scarcely been able to clear his face from its amazed look, when young Whitely was announced.

Still more was Mr. Percy astonished when the girls, all three of them, received the young man with apparently great pleasure, after what they had just said. Rose, who was a spoiled little beauty, saying always just what she felt like, jumped up, crossed the floor to meet him, both hands extended.

"Welcome, Bennie! It seems an age since we have seen you. Come, give an account of yourself; and don't you ever dare to deny us again for so long a time the pleasure of seeing you!"

"Thank you, Miss Rose. My studies have confined me more than usual this week. You know our examination is approaching, and consequently I have to sacrifice my greatest pleasure," the young man answered, his frank, handsome face glowing with warm smiles.

Benjamin Whitely was a young law-student, of considerable promise. He was universally esteemed and beloved. About a year previous to our story, he had been introduced to the Percys, and very soon succeeded in making his way into the hearts of the old folks, whose faces always brightened at the sound of his pleasant voice.

"Well, now, explain this mystery," exclaimed Mr. Percy, an hour after, when the door had closed on young Whitely's departing step. "Very strange behavior, truly. One moment, you declare it impossible for you to appear in the ball-room with this young man, and the next, you almost rush into his arms when he appears. Now, what am I to understand?"

"Just this, papa, dear. If we were choosing a partner for life, Bennie, or some one just like him, would, I'm sure, make us as happy as possible. But, indeed, he won't suit for an escort to the Secretary's ball," Pink answered, looking as if she was really very sorry that such was the case.

"Won't suit! Why won't he? There is no one visiting this house who suits me so well," Mr. Percy replied.

"Papa, you do not feel half as bad as we, about having to choose some one else," began Rose.

"The reason—I want that. But, pshaw! there is no reason in either of you. It's clean gone, or you would not talk so!"

"Listen, father, dear! And when I tell you all about it, I know you will appreciate the reason. First, please answer

one question? If we could possibly induce you to go with us to this ball—the ball of the season—what would you wear?"

"What nonsense is this? There is but one style that a gentleman could appear in."

"And that, father?"

"A full dress coat, and—"

"A swallow-tail. That's it, papa. That is the trouble. And it is too bad," Rose said, almost crying.

"Papa, we have never seen Mr. Whitely in full dress, and I'm sure he would not feel able to incur this extra expense. He always is very neatly dressed; but you know for this occasion something more is necessary."

"That's not your look-out, Miss Lily. You should have invited him, at any rate."

"Yes; and if I was a young lady, I would sooner be escorted anywhere by Mr. Whitely, even if he was not in full dress, than by any other man, no matter how elegantly he was gotten up," said Mrs. Percy, who had just entered the room.

"Well, it is of no use spending time in useless regrets. We must fix upon some one. We have only two days," Pink said, turning over the cards in a receiver near, tossing one after another aside.

"If the coat is what we are after, there is Mr. Dupree. I do not like him; but he makes a very elegant appearance. His toilette is always just perfect."

"You are right, Rose. Mr. Dupree it shall be," Lily said, her words immediately echoed by Pink.

"Humph! this popinjay is a mere stranger. I don't like the idea of your inviting him."

"Oh, papa, that is nothing. His letters of introduction are from people of the highest respectability," Lily returned—adding, "And William Foster says that General Smithson must have thought considerable of him, or he would never have given him that letter. The general is very peculiar about such things."

"All right. Go ahead with him to the ball, if he suits you, and his dress suits everybody else. I've nothing more to say, only I never was fond of these foreign fellows, with their fine air and *taking ways*," Mr. Percy said, laying a particular stress on the last words.

"Indeed, papa, his ways are by no means taking to me. But it is kind of nice, you know, to feel assured our escort is one of, if not *the* best dressed man present.

"All right, little Rose. As your selection is only for one evening I will not oppose. But I don't want to see this fellow dropping in too often."

* * * * * * *

The night of the ball arrived. Three more beautiful girls could scarcely be found. Lily, arrayed to suit her name, in pure white silk and tulle. Clusters of Marguerittes and sprays of lilies of the valley looping her dress and crowning her fair brow. Pink and Rose were lovely, robed alike in crepe, the color being the name they bore. Starry jasmines gleamed amid their dark braids, and looped the flowing drapery of their dresses.

Mr. Percy was proud of his daughters.

Low murmurs of admiration greeted their entrance into the reception-room. Following the stream, they advanced to receive the cordial welcome of their host, beside the lovely daughter of whom—to their immense surprise—the girls beheld Mr. Whitely. Our Bennie looking handsomer than ever, and in full evening dress.

Lily was not much affected by this incident, as her chosen one for the evening was likewise the one for life. And she was perfectly satisfied and very happy in her selection.

But with Pink and Rose it was a very different thing. They were both sincere admirers of young Whitely, and would (laying aside the *coat* question) have sooner been escorted by him than any gentleman they knew.

"Why did you not tell me you were coming?" Rose asked, a half hour after, when Bennie led her off to the dancing-rooms.

"Why did you not ask me?" Bennie returned. "I presented myself in ample time, and for that very purpose. But you preferred a new acquaintance to an old friend."

Likely as not, Rose would have just told the whole story, had not a change in the dance interrupted them.

To the girl's chagrin, Mr. Dupree knew no one, and seemed very much embarrassed when Lily, pointing out Gen. Smithson, said:

"There, Mr. Dupree, is somebody you know. He is coming this way. I used to know him, when I was a little girl. Do go speak to him, and let us renew our acquaintance."

Mr. Dupree had presented a letter of introduction from this gentleman.

"Ah, pardon, ma'mselle. You force me to expose the veery great trouble with my eyes. 'Tis only when veery near I can recognize my veery best friends," Mr. Dupree said.

And when the general drew very near, he said, hurriedly:

"Ah, pardon. I haste to speak to one veery dear friend," and away he went.

"Pink, look at that man standing next the window. I cannot imagine why he watches us so intently. See, he is looking now after Mr. Dupree," Lily said, immediately after that gentleman left their sight.

"He is exceedingly disagreeable-looking. I have noticed him before, this evening. It seems as if he felt it his duty to watch us," Rose said.

And just then Bennie came smiling toward them.

"Where is Mr. Dupree? I have just left a gentleman I've heard him speak of frequently. He arrived here only last evening. I thought I would find Mr. Dupree, and give them both a pleasant surprise," he said.

"Oh, I don't know where he is; gone to speak to some friend, I believe. But look over, leaning against that window, and tell me who that man is. He has been watching us the whole evening."

Bennie's eyes followed the direction, and his frank, candid face was darkened by a frown.

The individual, so disagreeable to the sisters, seeing that he had attracted their notice, moved slowly off in another direction.

"Who *is* that man?" again asked Rose.

"He is a detective. But I cannot imagine why he is on duty here to-night," Bennie replied, and then added, "I know him slightly, and if you will excuse me I will find out."

The young man had scarcely moved from Rose's side when Pink came up and whispered in an agitated tone, "Come to the dressing-room quickly. Lily is awaiting us there."

And there, white as the dress she wore, and trembling visibly, was Lily.

"What *is* it? Are you ill?" cried Rose, hastening to her side.

"I'll— I shall die of mortification, I'm sure. The wretch! Oh, but I cannot believe it; there must be some mistake."

"For mercy's sake, tell me *what is* the matter," Rose said, turning from one sister to the other.

"Mr. Dupree—"

"Well, *do* speak, Lily, Pink, one of you tell me."

"That very disagreeable-looking man. Oh, dear, it certainly will be in all the morning papers."

"Lily, Percy, *will* you tell me *what is* the matter?" Rose cried.

"Have I not told you? Pink, for mercy's sake let us hurry away before everybody in the house is staring at us. Rose, shut that door. You stand there as if you didn't understand—"

"What? I believe you have lost your wits. Pink, can *you* tell me?"

"Child, you ought to know. I felt something of the most dreadful kind was coming when that disagreeable-looking fellow was following us about so. Hush! some one is coming."

"They have gone to the next room. Pink, if you don't tell me right away, I will go find out," said Rose, starting toward the door.

"Indeed, I really don't know myself—only that it is something awful. William Foster sent us up here. The only thing I could understand was, that Mr. Dupree is a notorious pickpocket, and that disagreeable-looking man was after him. Oh, there is William and Mr. Whitely. Do let us get home!"

Seeing the blanched faces of the girls, the young men hastened to reassure them.

"The arrest was very quietly made, only being known to two, or possibly three, besides ourselves. Thanks to the great crowd, your escort was not much noticed," said William Foster.

"But, oh, dear! there are several of those terrible reporters here!" moaned Pink.

"And if it gets in the papers, papa will never forgive us."

"Don't fear that, Miss Rose. That individual so very disagreeable to you was gentlemanly enough to tell me I might assure you, ladies, that no publicity would be given to this affair," said Bennie.

"How came General Smithson to give such a man a letter of introduction? And Governor Jones, and Mayor Brown—I saw letters from those gentlemen," said Lily, turning to William Foster, and adding: "And you saw them, too."

"All forgeries. Now don't worry any more. Come down and get an ice."

"Stop, William, and promise us that you will not tell father. You will not, I know, Mr. Whitely," said Lily.

"We promise. And should Mr. Percy inquire concerning Mr. Dupree, *alias* Fitz, Black, Long, and as many more taking names, I think we can truly tell him that gentleman is on his way to Albany," replied Foster.

But the girls could not keep a secret from their mother; they never had before, and it weighed too heavy on their pure, loving hearts. So out it all came to her. And we all know, the best way the mother knew how to keep it safely was, to give it to her husband. But, agreeable to his promise not to worry the girls about Mr. Dupree, Mr. Percy really made a considerable sacrifice in resisting his ruling passion.

But it was more than human nature could stand. The topic was a rare one, inviting so many tit-bits of humor, that Mr. Percy was fully excused by his wife, when, with a merry twinkle in his eye, he said:

"Well, little girls, how about your escort? Did he take well, or did somebody take him? You know, may be other folks might not be so well pleased with his taking ways as we were."

The eyes of each girl sought her mother's with a reproaching glance, saying plainly, "How could you?"

"There! never mind," Mr. Percy said, seeing the expression on his daughters' faces.

"Don't reproach mamma, and I won't worry, teaze, or scold any more. I'll only just give you one little piece of advice: In future, girls, don't judge of a man by the clothes he wears, or choose one for the cut of his coat."

HATTIE'S FAULTS.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"HATTIE, you will attend to that matter?" said George Dale, coming back into the breakfast room.

"Certainly, George," answered his wife, sipping her coffee.

"And *immediately*, please. I have no doubt the poor man needs the money. You know his wife has been sick so long."

"Oh, yes; I had forgotten about that. I will send over some wine at the same time. I *intended* to last week."

"Yes, do. I guess wine is a rarity there, and it will do the poor woman good," replied George, closing the door and hurrying off.

Ten days after, when George Dale came in to dinner, he said:

"I saw Grey a few moments ago. Poor fellow! he looks miserably. Is there any tinkering about he can do? I want to help him whenever we can. Can't you fix up something and send it over, with a little more wine? At the same time, tell John to ask him to come here. I will look about, and find something he can do."

Hattie Dale uttered an exclamation, which caused her husband to ask anxiously:

"What is it? What ails you, Hattie?"

"Oh, George, I forgot all about sending that money, and the wine. Please don't look so angry. I am *so* sorry."

"I am not angry, Hattie; but very sorry and truly mortified at this. What must the poor man think of me? I professed to be so much interested in him, and gave him my word he should have the money that day. His family may

have really suffered during this bitter cold spell. Where is the money? I will go with it immediately myself."

While Hattie was fixing up some little delicacies to send to Mrs. Grey, she glanced up frequently at her husband's stern face. Wishing to offer some apology for failing to do as he had desired, she said:

"Oh, George, that day I had so many things to attend to —so many callers. I am very sorry. I intended fully to help Mr. Grey's family as much as I could—"

"Well, well, Hattie, it can't be helped now. We must do the best we can to make amends, that is all. Send over the basket by John. I must hurry with the money."

Mrs. Dale despatched John soon after, laden with many comforts for the sick woman.

A half hour after, George Dale returned, looking very much troubled. Hattie almost feared to ask the cause. At length she said:

"You look worried, George. Did you find Mr. Grey needing the money *very* much?"

Her husband looked earnestly at her an instant, and then simply answered:

"Yes."

Hattie, wishing to draw his mind from what she had failed to do, to the amends she had tried to make, asked:

"Did Mrs. Grey seem pleased with the things? I sent her a soft, warm shawl to wrap about her when she sits up."

"Hattie, I am sorry to add to the feelings of regret I know you truly feel. Mrs. Grey will never sit up on earth again."

"Oh, is she so *very* ill?" Hattie asked, with a sharp tinge of self-reproach.

"She is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Hattie. "Oh, if I only had thought! I *did* intend to do all you wished, and more. Perhaps she might have died, any how. George, surely you do not think that my neglect—"

"Killed her? Certainly not, child. But, Hattie, we should both have felt better about this if we had done what we could to help them. It is very annoying to have our hearts filled with regrets. We will not talk any more about it now. Only try and remember in future that 'good *intentions*' profit no one."

Hattie did very well for some time after this, and her husband congratulated himself upon the happy change. They were people of abundant means, and both liberal and charitably inclined.

Hattie, however, was very fashionable and very gay, her time taken up always with the latest whims of society, of which she was a great belle, notwithstanding she was a wife and mother.

A few months after this, Hattie's brother, who was a naval officer, returned from a three years' cruise. While sitting with his sister one day, he drew from his pocket a worn and faded needle-book, saying:

"Yesterday I was clearing out my sea chest, and found this. Dora made it for me over twenty-five years ago, when I first went to Annapolis. How well I remember her trotting me down town with her, to show me off in my midshipman's uniform. Poor, dear Dora! I suppose you have heard nothing of her during my absence, Hattie?"

"No, nothing."

"Have you ever sought to, Hattie? You know, although not our own sister, she was our father's child, and he loved her very dearly."

"I know she broke his heart. I'm sure her running away and marrying that worthless fellow caused papa's death. I suppose he has drunk himself out of the world long before this. But don't let us talk about them. I don't like even to *think* that there is, or ever was, a Dora Bartlett," Hattie said, and trying to turn the conversation, asked:

"Are you going with me this evening to the reception?"

"Hattie, Hattie," returned Captain Bartlett, shaking his head, "Why are you so completely absorbed in the gayeties of life? Do you ever think of anything serious? I don't want to talk of receptions, or anything of the kind. I want to talk and think of my sister. You were too young to remember much of her, or you would not feel so. She was a very lovely girl, and very loving too. If I had not been in foreign parts, so much from home, I should have found her, or known something of her whereabouts."

"Suppose you should find them; their position must be so, so—well, very different from ours—it would be very embarrassing, to say the least," rejoined Hattie.

"Position! Suppose it is—I don't care how humble—I know we are of the same blood. Oh, if I could find her, I would rejoice truly!" Captain Bartlett said, with much warmth.

Just about this time the ladies of Hattie's circle had formed a charitable society, and it being quite fashionable to do the benevolent, Hattie was well pleased to spend her money thus. A severe cold, confining her to the house, prevented her accompanying her friends on their rounds of mercy. However, to her were assigned the needy in her immediate neighborhood, a list of whom was handed her—"Only three," her friend said.

"Oh, indeed I do not see how I can do it. I've so *very* many things on my mind now. Here, Kate dear, take this," handing twenty dollars, "and do get what they need just now, and let me off, won't you?" Hattie pleaded, always ready to shift off any extra case.

"Well, yes," replied her friend; "but certainly you can give some little thought to *one* family quite near here—a widow with three children. They are very destitute. Come to the window; I will show you. You see that house on the next block, across? There they are. We got permission for them to occupy a couple of rooms. The house has been untenanted for a long while. There is some trouble about the title. As it is going to destruction, they were willing that Mrs.

Gant should stay there and take care of it. Now you *must* look out for these folks. They are provided with sufficient for about three days. After that I leave them to you. In the meantime, if you are disposed, you can send them some soup, or anything. Will you promise to remember them?"

"Oh, yes, I can attend to them."

"And I may rest easy concerning them?"

"Certainly. Let me see, this is Monday; Wednesday or Thursday morning. All right; I will remember, and send brother, if I am not well enough. He delights in such errands," Hattie said.

The three days passed. Hattie had been so busy admiring and displaying the handsome presents from the Indies and China which her brother had brought her, that all thoughts of the widow across the way had entirely escaped her mind.

She had fully intended to do so much, particularly for the children. She had lots of things she was going to send them.

One week from the day she had promised to take care of Mrs. Gant, Capt. Bartlett came in, saying:

"It is going to be a bitter night, and I am afraid, a great deal of suffering too. I wish I could provide fuel for *all* the poor, and feel that all about us had a good supper and warm bed to-night. I feel more for the old folks and children. Did you send around some of those preserves to the poor young ones in the neighborhood, Hattie?"

"Oh, dear, dear!" cried Hattie.

"What is the matter?"

"Why, enough. I'm frightened to think what the consequence may be;" her mind reverting to Mrs. Grey. "I forgot to look after a family near—Mrs. Gant, a poor widow. Dear, dear, I'm so sorry. I have so much to think of. I did intend—"

"Oh, Hattie, those good intentions again," said her brother.

"Hush! Don't talk to me. Go; do. I will show you. Come to the door," Hattie urged, almost crying.

Captain Bartlett followed her. Pointing to the house, she said:

"There is a child at the door now. Oh, how cold it is! Do hurry!"

Her brother hastened to do her bidding.

Hours passed, and he returned not. Hattie for a while felt quite uneasy, but at length quieted her fears with the thought of her brother's meeting with some of his old friends, and going with them.

It was near ten o'clock, when she heard his step in the hall. Opening the drawing-room door, she called:

"Oh, you truant! Come in and give an account of yourself. Five hours absent—"

She checked the light words as he entered. What a change those few hours had worked in his features! Not as usually smiling he approached her, but with eyes full of sadness, as he said:

"Hattie, I have found our sister."

"Dora found! How? Where?" cried Hattie, with more astonishment than pleasure in her tone.

"You sent me to her."

"I? I don't understand what you mean. I sent you?"

"Yes; to the widow, Mrs. *Gant* you called her—*Dant* is the name. I went, and found Dora, starving—aye, starving to death, I feared. One of her babes was released from hunger and cold; another suffering fearfully. And the poor mother, half crazed with grief, sat holding the lifeless form of the one, and trying to keep the other warm by wrapping her own garment around it and pressing it close to her bosom—the dead on one arm, the dying, perhaps, on the other."

"Oh, don't tell me. Can such things be? No, no, you want to frighten me—to punish me for my neglect. Why did she not send to us?"

"Hattie, I would not trifle with you—I could not; my heart is too full of sorrow. I trust Dora and the two remaining children can be restored to health. Of one I have doubts,

however. Why she did not send was this: Miss Hunt went from you to her, and told her you would take care of them. As you failed to do so, she thought, poor thing, that you had discovered who she was, and therefore would not help her. Once she sent the oldest girl; you remember, the day you ordered the servants not to have you disturbed. The child's not being allowed to see you confirmed her fear, and without food, without fire, I found them."

"Oh, Edgar! Oh, what *can* I do? Heaven knows I forgot. I intended to do right. Take me to her, brother. Don't let her think me so cruel!" Hattie cried.

"I cannot take you to-night. Rest assured, she is as comfortable as possible. I have placed them in the Providence Hospital. The kind nurses there know best what to do for them. They will have every care there, even were they without money or friends; but I placed a sum ample to command all they can possibly need. To-morrow, should you feel inclined, I will take you to our sister."

"I shall never, never forgive myself. And George—oh, he will *never* place any confidence in me again. What *am* I to do, Edgar?"

"Hattie, George will never know it, I trust. And, my dear sister, promise me, in *future, to do at once* the good deeds your heart prompts. Think less of fashions and dress, dear, and more of God's needy children that are round about you everywhere. You have a kind, loving heart, Hattie, and your *intentions* are *always* good. But, oh, you have seen to-day the result of 'good intentions.'"

THE END.

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